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Trains were still new to Libby in the spring of 1898 when Jacoba Boothman arrived, as a bride of nineteen, in that new mining town in the northwest corner of Montana. Everybody who could possibly be present was on hand to welcome the daily Great Northern train and give every newcomer a thorough looking over. This day the crowd was perhaps a little larger because word had gone around that Harry Boothman was bringing home his new wife. Gallantly he helped her down the steps. People of every description — mostly men — filled the station platform and, to a man, every one of them removed his hat and stood at attention — as if in deference to royalty. Then, flushed and proud, Harry began to introduce to her one after another of his friends. This was her welcome to the Kootenai River country. Here she was to live for the major portion of her life.

Her home was to be a log cabin in a clearing by the river, and here she was to become the mother of ten children. Only in after years, when her family was all grown, would she begin to chronicle the story of her brood and of this homestead by the river.

*(Continued on back flap)*

*Frontispiece line drawing by the late Winifred Peck Ratekin. Jacket photo courtesy Mr. Robert Goldfist, Libby Photo Mart, Libby, Montana.*

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ON THE  
KOOTENAI

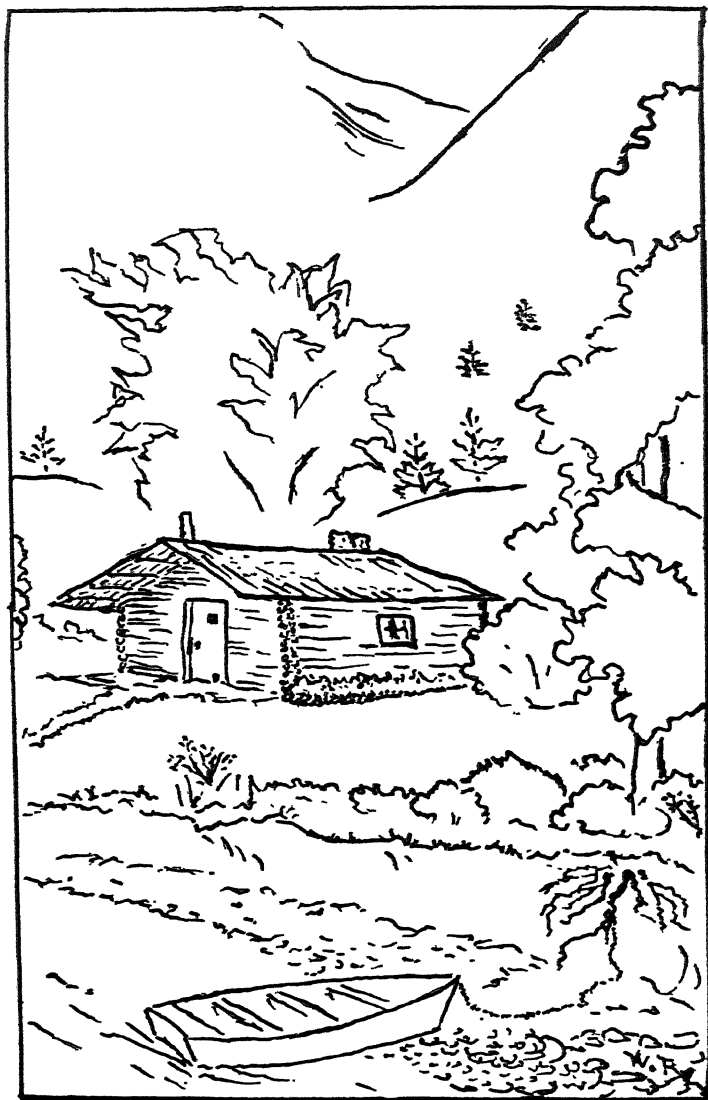
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### THE OLD LOG CABIN

From a line drawing by the late Mrs. Winnifred Peek Ratekin, of Libby, Montana.

# HOMESTEAD on the KOOTENAI

*By*

JACOBA BOOTHMAN BRAD

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS



THE CAXTON PRINTERS, LTD.

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1960

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## To My Children

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## *Foreword*

WHEN I WAS a little girl one of the big thrills of my life was Chautauqua week each summer. Mother's friend, Mrs. Boothman, would come to town shortly after noon each day with her girls and younger boys, and we would attend the afternoon performance, rain or shine. On the way to our house for supper Mrs. Boothman would generally stop by one of the stores and get "bought" cookies and other treats to add to Mother's preparations. The lectures which usually ended the evening program often failed to keep us children awake but they did not dull our excitement over the entire event.

Another great pleasure was visiting at the pleasant ranch home of the Boothmans. How she ever maintained her usual calm disposition when my brother Jack and I spent endless hours pumping her player piano, the only one in our circle of acquaintances, is a wonder to me now.

Mrs. Boothman Brad has maintained her interest in beauty and learning, and her kindliness all through the years. Her talent for enjoying the "little things," as well as the big ones, and courageously accepting the problems of life has been an inspiration to many.

The sharing of her experiences in this book will be welcomed by those who remember such events with a bit of nostalgia for that period which, in retrospect, seems to have been so simple and carefree. For the younger generation, many of whom have never seen or heard of utensils common to that time, this can be a happy glimpse to that way of life.

Our Northwest corner of Montana was explored by David Thompson in the early 1800's when he traveled down the Kootenai from Canada. This section, situated far from the well-known historical spots of our state, has had very little written about it, but now there comes a homey, entertaining volume which should interest all readers of Americana as well as local residents.

INEZ RATEKIN HARRIG (MRS. ROBERT)





## *Acknowledgment*

I WISH TO EXPRESS my thanks and sincere appreciation to my daughter, Mary Boothman, and to my good friend, Mrs. Robert Herrig (Inez Ratekin), for their encouragement, their helpful suggestions, and their assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

JACOBA BOOTHMAN BRAD

Libby, Montana  
December 23, 1959





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HOMESTEAD  
ON THE  
KOOTENAI





## *The Log Cabin*

IT WAS MARCH, 1898. We were speeding on to our new home in Libby—in the northwest corner of Montana. From the train window I watched the panoramic view as we passed through a heavily timbered section of the country. In places where the railroad was built up on a grade we could see for miles around—dense forests, with purple snow-capped mountains in the distance. Then we rumbled over a bridge. Far below, a raging torrent of muddy water was churned into foam as it tore wildly down the gorge. Harry was pointing out to me approximately where he and Jack Kearney had traveled on horseback, toward the setting sun, on their way to the Libby Creek placer mines some six years earlier.

We were getting very near our destination now, and I could sense an inner excitement in Harry as I snuggled close in the crook of his arm. There was a slight rustling sound, and I caught a man's eye across the aisle as he looked at me over the edge of his newspaper. He smiled and lowered his head. A girl several seats back giggled.

"People are noticing us," I said, raising my head from Harry's shoulder and sitting up.

"Are they? I suppose our happiness shows in our faces." And he laughed.

Finally the train rumbled to a stop. The very fact that the train was in was cause for excitement in Libby. The blacksmith postponed his horseshoeing for a time, and the barber and his customer both decided that the haircut could be finished when the train had gone. In fact, anyone who could possibly get there was on hand to welcome the daily train.

Trains were still very new to Libby, and every newcomer was given a very thorough looking-over. But aside from this, word had gotten around that Harry Boothman was bringing home his bride—so perhaps the crowd this day was a little larger than usual. People of every description—mostly men—filled the station platform. As we alighted from the train, Harry gallantly helping me down the steps, there was a murmur and then a hush. To a man they all took off their hats and stood at attention—as if in deference to royalty. But soon Harry, flushed and proud, started introducing one after another of his friends to me. They were a colorful and varied group of men—some bearded, some balding, some tall and some short. I shook hands with them all, mostly warm, perspiring hands.

One man, middle-aged and bearded, stood back a little from the rest, his beard bobbing up and down with nervous, rhythmic strokes as he chewed, his eyes darting furtively here and there as if he wanted to escape. Harry finally noticed him and called, "Come over here, Johnny, and meet my wife."

Johnny turned his head and delivered himself of his quid of chewing tobacco, then came over, followed by a big German shepherd dog.

"Johnny, this is my wife. This is Johnny Vest, my dear. He is a neighbor of ours, but he spends most of his time in the hills prospecting, his only companion his faithful dog, Nero. Hello, old boy." The dog wriggled in acknowledgment.

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am," said Johnny Vest, and our hands met.

Al Howard shook my hand very heartily, saying "Welcome to this Godforsaken neck of the woods, ma'am."

Presently a wagon drawn by a lively team of bays drew up, and the driver was introduced as Charley Sheldon. His eyes crinkled with pleasure as he took off his hat with a flourish and bowed in greeting. "I'm glad to welcome you home, Mrs. Boothman, to our humble little town."

Willing hands then helped to pile trunks, suitcases, and boxes into the back of the wagon. Charley boosted me up to the seat, which was covered with a big bear rug. Harry got in beside me and pulled a similar rug up over our knees, and we were off. First we went uptown to the grocery store, where I met John P. Wall, one of Libby's first merchants, who gave me a rousing welcome and congratulated Harry warmly on bringing such a "young and handsome bride" home with him. (I put him down as quite a flatterer.) Then, in no time at all, a huge box of groceries was lifted into the wagon—Harry

must have ordered them beforehand as they were all ready and waiting. Then we were off for the ranch.

When we came to the river we drove up onto the ferryboat and I met Johnny Rouse and Jack Elliot, who ran the ferry. The sparkling green water gurgled pleasantly around the big flatboat as we glided silently across the Kootenai. Then, with a grating of planks on the rocks, the boat swung around and they let down the apron and the team started down onto the rocks of the river bed. We jounced around considerably before we finally came to smoother ground and the road.

It was a beautiful evening. The sun was nearing the western horizon and there was a pleasant crispness in the air. The clomping of the horses' hoofs and the clatter of the wagon wheels almost drowned out our voices as we crunched through patches of brittle snow or over rocky places, then through muddy stretches. My eyes took in the sweep of the river, the deep patches of forest, the level stretches, the sharp curve as the road wound around the cliffs, providing a view of the far west where the sun was nearing the snow-capped mountaintops. For a moment a wild fear came over me at the thought of the utter strangeness and vastness of this wilderness. Then I felt the reassuring pressure of Harry's hand as he seemed to sense my feeling. I returned the pressure, and felt secure in his love and consideration for me. Then he was saying, "Look, we are nearly home! This is the beginning of our land."

We came into a clearing, and over by the river stood a log cabin. Blue smoke rose in a straight column from the stone chimney. The late afternoon sun slanted down onto the little place, wreathing it in a warm glow.

The panting horses came to a stop, and Shep, Harry's black-and-tan shepherd dog, bounded out to meet us. The men climbed down from the wagon and Shep greeted Harry with wild ecstasy. Jack Kearney, who had been taking care of the place in Harry's absence, shambled over from the barn to help with the unloading. He was as bashful as a schoolboy. He crushed his hat to him with both hands as he acknowledged the introduction. Charley, our driver, started back to town, and we watched as the team and wagon rounded the curve and disappeared out of sight. Harry and I turned then toward the cabin, while Jack busied himself with the luggage.

The river ran only a few feet from the porch. We stood side by side for a time, taking in the beauty of the scene—the setting sun lighting up the tops of the mountains in the east and the shadows deepening along the river. I heard a “cheeping” and a grumbling off to the left and Harry, seeing the question in my face, explained, “That’s only Jack putting the chickens to bed. Remember, I told you we already have some baby chicks.” Then we watched Jack as he started along the trail toward his own cabin several miles up the river.

The door stood invitingly ajar. "Stay out, Shep," Harry said as he led me into my new home.

A big stone fireplace in the left-hand corner was glowing with light and heat. There were shavings ready by the cookstove, and Harry soon had a fire started, put water on to boil for tea, and set the supper things out on the table which stood under the square window against the right wall. By the light of the Rochester lamp we sat down to our first meal in our own home.

After supper we stepped out onto the porch again. Night had settled down on the world, and a brilliant moon was forcing its way up from behind the mountains in the east and turning the dark river to silver and the trees to black shadows. An owl hooted in the distance and robins twittered in the trees close at hand. There was the river's murmur mingled with small insect voices—the muted music of the day's end.

Then Harry was telling me the story of this beautiful river which flows down out of Canada, makes a dip into the northwestern corner of Montana and through the northeastern tip of Idaho, then turns back into Canada. This mighty river—the Kootenai—as unpredictable as the Indians for whom it was named—thunders through its canyons and flows calmly through pleasant valleys, and is as clear green as the Nile throughout most of the year.

## *Getting Acquainted*

WHEN I OPENED my eyes the next morning Harry was standing beside the bed trying to awaken me. "Come on," he said, "I want to show you something," and he motioned toward the window. I jumped up and looked out. There at a small haystack back of the cabin were three deer munching the hay. They were the first deer that I had ever seen—such sleek, graceful animals. As we watched they became frightened and fairly floated away over the fence and into the thickets.

My first day on the ranch had begun! The coffee was already boiling and Harry reached up to a shelf in the corner behind the stove and took down the can of "makens" for the doughsods, or sour-dough pancakes. He knew just how much of this and that and the other to put in, and the result was a most delicious pancake.

The day was bright and clear, and Harry took me around and showed me the chickens. One hen had already hatched a clutch of twelve chicks, and two others were sitting on eggs. There was a great commotion as we approached—a woman was indeed a strange sight. Shep followed us as Harry pointed

out some likely spots along the river and promised to take me fishing before long as the trout were said to be biting. He showed me where the boat was anchored, down the brushy bank at the edge of the river. Then he pointed out the trail which led up the steep mountainside, saying we would climb it someday soon to get a better view of the surrounding country.

We walked down the river along the old Indian trail. There, in a dense patch of timber, stood an ancient fir tree with a crude platform in its branches, built of limbs and tied securely with buckskin thongs. Harry said it was undoubtedly built by the Indians years before, when they lived in the opening in the forest that was now our home. He explained that the contraption was a blind where one could sit in comfort stalking any unwary game that might come within range of bow and arrow or the more modern gun.

I also discovered that there was another building on the place which Harry called the office. It contained a bunk bed, a couple of chairs, a table and a Sively stove. The latter was a cone-shaped piece of sheet steel, the top coming almost to a point and fitting snugly into the stovepipe, and it was set on a square platform filled with soil. It had a door on one side and a small draft slide below the door, and was a very effective heater. This was really our spare room, and anyone who stayed for the night, whether he was a guest, a hired man, or merely a wanderer, slept here.



## *Fishing on the Kootenai*

TOWARD EVENING, a few days later, Jack came up carrying a nice string of trout on a forked stick. Harry greeted him with a broad smile.

"By Jove, Jack, it looks as though you had pretty good luck."

"Yes, sir, this morning I takes mu fishin' outfit, and I goes up thu river 'bout a half a mile, and thar, in that 'er eddy, where that 'er tree fell into the river las' fall—well, by gum, I drapped mu hook in thar and kinder let 'er float down in under the tree like, and holy blazes, that 'er biggest 'un thar just grabs it and takes off like lightnin', and me a pullin' and a tuggin'. Wal, by gum, he like to broke mu pole afore I lands him. Yes, sir, they're bitin' mighty good fur this early."

Going over to the fireplace he moved the logs around with his heavy boot, spat at the mounting sparks, and sauntered out for more wood.

Harry cleaned the fish, and we went about getting supper, while Jack brought in more wood and filled the water pails. "Sit up, Jack," said Harry, "supper is just about ready. Man, that fish smells good, and I'm as hungry as the proverbial wolf!"

A few days later I had my first boat ride. Harry poled the boat skillfully up along the bank for about a mile, and we were floating lazily downstream when he said, "Look at that," pointing up on the mountainside. At first I didn't see a thing; then, following his directing finger, I spotted, away up on the mountain, a line of deer slowly moving upward. There must have been a hundred or more. Harry explained that they were on their annual trek to higher country where they had their summer range.

"The leader is always a big old stag," he stated.

"Is that a stag?" I asked. "I thought a stag had antlers."

"No," he answered. "In the spring the antlers are just nubbins, thick and velvety, that grow and branch out, each year adding a branch or prong. During the summer they stop growing and become dry. Then the stag rubs the velvet off on the trunks of trees, and by August or September his horns are fully developed. By the new year they have loosened and dropped off, and the process begins all over again."

"What's that?" I asked, as I pointed out a group of young cottonwood trees along the bank, with the bark freshly stripped off. Just then there was a loud splash in the still water of an eddy we were passing.

"Those are beaver workings," Harry answered, "and that was the old fellow himself diving down out of sight. He is probably watching us right now with just his head out of the water, along the bank here somewhere."

The fish were feeding in the eddies, and Harry anchored the boat in likely-looking spots along the way. We caught a good mess of trout as we stopped at the various choice places—finally getting home when the shadows had deepened and the day was at an end.

## *Work, and a Dance in Libby*

OF COURSE THERE was work to be done, too. Our new trees and plants had arrived, and we were busy every day planting our young orchard. Jack came to help us. First the land had to be plowed and harrowed; then they marked it off into straight rows and dug a deep hole for each little tree. Harry and I then carefully spread the tiny roots in the bottoms of the holes and sifted fine soil in about them, finally filling the holes and pouring in a pail of water from the river and letting it sink down among the roots. Then we leveled up the holes with dry soil. We planted berry bushes and set out strawberry plants, and among the tiny apple trees we planted our vegetable garden. Harry made a chicken-wire fence along the east side of the house, and I planted a flower garden there in front of the east window.

One Saturday night the townspeople gave a dance in our honor, and I became acquainted with the business people of the town — miners, too — but mainly businessmen and businesswomen. There were the James Harrises, the Cridermans, the Steve McCarthys, the Frank Leonards, the Spencers, Browns, Clarks, Fausts, Downings, Leighs, and many others.

I found them the friendliest people that I had ever met, and I was surely beginning to feel at home in my new surroundings.

There were many children present, too. Baby sitters had not been heard of then, and where the parents went—the mothers, that is—the children went, too. Our wraps were laid on tables along one wall, and bundled-up babies slept soundly among the coats in spite of the noise. When they woke up, their mothers fed them (baby bottles were not very popular in those days, either) and they quickly went back to sleep. After the dance, the crowd gathered for a big supper, and every one voted the affair one of the most enjoyable that the town had ever had.

The weather suddenly turned quite warm, and the river began to rise from the melting snow in the mountains. We discontinued boat riding and fishing until the river became lower. But Harry liked crossing in the boat and walking to town on the railroad track, even though it meant poling the boat upstream quite a ways—sometimes even pulling it up along the bank by hanging onto limbs and roots. This was preferable to the uncertainty of finding anyone at the ferryboat landing, as the ferrymen were often engaged in a game of cards uptown, and it sometimes took an hour or more of shouting to rouse them and convince them that someone wanted to cross the river. So Harry nearly always crossed in his own boat when it was necessary to go to town.

On his homeward trip his packsack was usually well filled—with groceries and household items, news-

papers and the mail. As the cool of the evening was a pleasant time for the three-mile walk, darkness often settled down on our wooded world before he reached home. I would step out on the porch and listen, and Shep would listen with me. Sometimes I would hear the rhythmic strokes of the oars and know that he was already in the boat, crossing the river, and Shep would wag his tail to let me know that he heard it, too, and that all was well. At other times I would stand and listen and finally venture a "Yoo hoo!" And then a louder, bolder "Yoo hoo!" Sometimes a coyote, somewhere in the distance, would howl dismally, answered perhaps by another animal away off on the opposite mountainside. Shep, standing at attention, would sniff the air and look expectantly down the river, trying with me to penetrate the blackness of the night. Then I would call again, and would hear, away off in the night, the answering "Yoo hoo!" Of course Shep would hear it too, and he would cavort around, wagging his tail in ecstasy. I would catch his front paws and we would whirl about in dizzy joy for a few minutes.

Presently I would call again, and there would be the answer, closer now. Then I could see the glimmer of the palouser which Harry always carried, away down the track. Everybody carried this type of a light if he was to be out after dark and there was no moon. It consisted of a tin can turned sideways and fitted with a handle, a hole punched on the under side to hold a candle. The little light was

protected on all sides except the front, and the back, or bottom, of the can served as a reflector.

Then there would be the scraping sound of the boat as it was pushed into the water, and the clatter of the chain as it struck the bottom of the boat. After that we heard the rhythmic stroke of the oars as the boat glided across the river toward us. I was there with the lantern to guide him to the spot where the boat was to land. He would throw out the chain to me and I would hold it fast while he climbed out and gave me a big hug and kiss—as if we had been parted for a week. And Shep would add to the happy reunion with his squealing and jumping.

The river rose higher and ever higher, and it became difficult to cross in our small boat. Whole trees and debris of all kinds floated on the dark water as it rushed angrily along its course.

It was June now, and June 2 was Harry's birthday. I gathered wild strawberries and made a surprise strawberry shortcake for the occasion. Harry's enthusiastic appreciation was ample reward for my afternoon spent in the hot sun gathering the tiny berries.

## *A Fishing Trip on Pipe Creek*

THE DAYS WERE lengthening and growing warmer. The river was still too high and muddy for good fishing, but it was reported that the creeks were low and clear, and that the fish were biting. The weather seemed settled for a long, dry spell. Harry suggested that we take a few days off and go on a fishing trip up Pipe Creek. It meant a trip of four or five miles on foot, but I was undaunted. No sooner had he made the suggestion than I was busy with the preparations. I baked a batch of bread and a big spice cake with raisins and currants.

It was still dark the next morning when I heard activity in the cabin. I opened one eye and saw Harry making the fire in the cookstove, putting on the coffee, and beginning to stir up the sour dough. "Oh, yes," I remembered, "this is the day we go fishing." I got up quickly and soon we were both busily making ready for the trip. Harry put out enough feed and water for the chickens for several days. He made a bedroll and we filled two packsacks with food and cooking utensils. Shep seemed to sense that something unusual was afoot—he scampered around, trying to catch his tail, and



acting up generally. Harry shouldered one of the packs and I took the other. Then he gave me the .22 rifle, and he put the bedroll under his arm.

We set out just as the sun came up over the horse range—the big flat mountain directly east. Shep ran ahead, looking back from time to time to see if we were coming. The air was crisp and the grass was wet with dew as we trudged along in the early morning. For a time we followed the wagon road, walking side by side; then it became merely a trail, and we had to go Indian file—Harry in the lead.

A ruffed grouse flew up from our path in a bristling flurry, scattering her brood of tiny chicks to right and left. Shep started to chase them, but Harry called him back. She lit a few feet ahead of us, in the trail, dragging one wing and crying plaintively in an effort to distract us from her little ones. The little striped balls of down, so still and so much the color of the dead leaves and rocks and sticks around them, disappeared before our very eyes.

We walked on, finally cutting across the Pipe Creek flats to the creek. There was a steep wooded bank to climb down before we could reach the water. We found a deer trail which led us sideling down the bank. Here was a level stretch with giant pines, clumps of firs, and raspberry and serviceberry thickets. Little gray rabbits scuttled out of our way, and pine squirrels chattered at us from the trees.

A turn in the trail brought us quite suddenly to the sparkling stream that was our destination. We came to a beautiful green spot, shaded by giant

pinus and carpeted with the softest grass and the daintiest flowers—princess pine, stars-of-Bethlehem, and tiny twin bells embedded in moss. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at this beautiful place. The sun was still high in the sky, but in this quiet spot the shades of evening seemed to dwell always.

We were glad to let the heavy packs slide off of our shoulders and sit down on a fallen log to rest beside the sparkling creek. Shep waded out into the cool water and then lay at the water's edge with tongue lolling, lapping at the little puddles. We were hungry after our long walk so I unpacked part of our food while Harry cut a couple of long, slender willows for fishing poles and fitted them up with lines and hooks. We ate quickly; then, eager to try our luck, we waded out into the stream. It didn't take us long to catch more than enough trout for our supper, and it was well before dark when we returned to our camping place.

We gathered fir boughs, and Harry made a bed that was both fragrant and soft. Then he made a small fire between two flat rocks for cooking. He put up two forked green sticks, one on each side of the fire, laid a horizontal green pole across from fork to fork, and suspended the coffeepot from this pole with a wire hook. Then we fried the fish in bacon fat. Our supper that night was a feast indeed, by the warmth of the fire, beside the pleasant creek, at the end of a strenuous day.

Harry had gathered a great pile of wood and

limbs, and after supper he piled wood on the fire until the sparks rose up and seemed to mingle with the stars away in the velvet blackness of the sky.

When the fire had died down and the mosquitoes had disappeared, we slipped into our blankets. Lulled by the small cricket voices of the night, and the murmur of the creek close by, with Shep keeping guard by the dying embers, we were soon fast asleep.

When I peered cautiously out from under the blankets the next morning, Harry was already up and was starting the fire. Shep was nuzzling around at my feet, looking for a warm spot. Every grass blade and leaf was trembling with sparkling drops of dew. A cold draft struck me in the face as I sat up.

Harry heard me stirring around and called to me, "It isn't necessary for you to get up yet. Wait until the sun comes up and dries the grass a little. Fish won't be biting until it warms up anyway."

So I gladly snuggled down under the warm covers again. I must have slept, because when I looked up again the sun was shining and I could smell coffee boiling. Then Harry was approaching with a cup of coffee for me.

"This will wake you up," he said, handing me the steaming cup.

It was a good eye-opener, and I was soon busy helping to fry the fish, enjoying breakfast in the fresh morning air, and washing the plates and cups afterwards in the creek. The sun was growing warm-

er, and by ten o'clock the grass was dry and we started off for the day's fishing.

During the afternoon we became separated, and I was wading along over my shoe tops in the swift water when I looked up and saw an Indian coming down the stream toward me! He had on but few clothes and his shoulders gleamed like burnished copper in the bright sunlight. What should I do? I had a wild desire to call for Harry, or to turn back, or to get out of the creek and run into the brush and hide—but I did none of these things. I decided that I wouldn't let him know I was frightened, and that if he said anything I would let him know that I wasn't alone—that my husband was just behind me. So I came on, nonchalantly, fishing as I came—and so did he. Out of the corner of my eye I could see him coming closer and ever closer—never looking toward me. Then we were opposite each other, and we passed, he nearer the left bank and I on the right in the narrow stream. He never seemed to see me at all—and I didn't let on that I had seen him either—but I am sure that I hastened my pace after we passed. Harry laughed when I told him about it. They had met, too, and had exchanged a brief "How" and a wave of the hand.

The next night the coyotes howled and the owls hooted, and Shep growled and acted very restless. Harry said that it might be a storm warning, but the weather was warm and balmy and there wasn't a breath of air—it was almost sultry. Even the next morning was clear and bright, and as this was our

last day, we started out to catch a mess of fish to take home with us. The fish were biting very well, and we soon had our canvas fish bags filled.

When we came out of the water, black clouds had started to gather overhead, and it looked as if we might have a shower. Harry made the fire and we put on coffee and were frying the fish when the wind started to blow. Trees swayed and limbs crashed down all around us. I grabbed the frying pan full of fish and Harry took the coffeepot, and we ran for a clearing to keep from being pelted by falling limbs and, possibly, falling trees. It began to rain, and the wind-driven drops pelted our faces. We laughed in excitement, but it was no laughing matter—we were getting drenched. Then the wind died down. We found a dry place under a spreading fir tree, where we drank our coffee and ate our bread and fried fish, but the rain continued.

We packed up our damp blankets, filled our packsacks, and started home. The rain had settled down to a steady drizzle, and darkness came over us. Presently Harry said that we were no longer on the trail, but that he knew the general direction and would soon find it, and presently we were on a trail again. Shep put his nose to the ground and trotted happily ahead, and Harry said he was sure it was the right trail. But I was afraid it wasn't the right trail and that we were completely lost. Harry laughed at my fears, in spite of our discomfort, and we trudged along.

I stayed close behind him on the narrow trail. I

imagined I could hear stealthy footsteps behind us, and I asked him if he thought we were being followed by a bear or a mountain lion, or perhaps that Indian that I had seen in the creek the day before. Again Harry laughed and assured me that any bear or mountain lion would know better than to be out on such a night.

"And as for the Indian," he added, "he is probably sitting in a nice warm tepee at this very moment, smoking his pipe and watching his squaw broil the trout over a little fire in the middle of the tent while he relates his meeting with the paleface squaw." And then we both laughed as the rain continued to splash from our heads into our faces, down our necks, and into our shoes. At last we reached home, glad to be able to change into dry clothing and sit before the cheery fire, sipping hot tea and reviewing our experiences of the past three days.

## *Mountain Climbing*

IT WAS A TYPICALLY hot, clear morning in late June. We had been weeding the vegetable garden, but now it was getting too warm for this backbreaking chore. So we took a walk in our young orchard—observing the growth the little trees had made and taking note of any that had failed to start. Then we gathered radishes and green onions and tender young lettuce to add to our dinner table. Some of the potatoes were beginning to bloom, and the new peas were commencing to set. We were very proud of our place—our homestead on the Kootenai.

The mountains looked green and enticing, with their mysterious trails and shady gulches, and I had always wanted to climb up there where I could see the countryside. Perhaps I felt hemmed in here in the valley; at least I had a curious feeling that I wanted to see out. So I asked Harry about that trip to the top of the mountain that we had been looking forward to, and the date was set for the following Sunday.

After the chores were done I fixed a picnic lunch, and, calling to Shep to come along, Harry and I set off for a walk up the mountain trail which wound

around the mountain, over cliffs, and through thickets of fir and pine. Buckbrush, with its shining leaves, covered the ground, almost hiding the trail in places. The scorching sun of early summer shone down on us. Presently we sat in the shade of a spreading fir tree, and Shep lay down a few feet away, panting, with tongue lolling—at times drawing it in and snapping at flies that buzzed around his ears. We rested here for a time, wiping the perspiration from our faces and looking down as new vistas opened up to us. A whistle shrieked, and looking far below we could see a train moving slowly along, with a ribbon of black smoke trailing behind. It seemed from this height to move as a snake crawls, curving in and out, inching slowly, stealthily toward the west, and finally disappearing from sight in a clearing in the forest where we could see the smoky haze from the little settlement that was Libby. The river lay glistening below us, with many turns and twists, as it flowed gently along. The green of the trees and the blue of the sky were reflected in its clear waters.

When we had rested a bit we followed the trail up around the mountain and came presently to the upper part of Tub Gulch—perhaps a mile above the river. Here a small stream trickled over the pebbles, and shady nooks were everywhere inviting us to rest. We found a spot to spread our lunch beside a big boulder where trees made a welcome shady place on the grassy slope. Shep lay down in the refreshing coolness of the damp earth below us, lapping at the little water-filled depressions made by footprints



around him as he cooled his heaving sides—but always alert for a stray crust or tidbit from our lunch.

Here we rested after eating, letting the sun sink lower in the west. We must have dozed, as we were both startled by the sharp barking of Shep. A squirrel on the limb of a fir tree above the spring was chattering down at him, trembling excitedly, its tail curled over its back. The sun was hazy in the west, and birds were awakening to the business of feeding hungry broods. Insects droned from hidden places in the grass, and a buzzard zoomed screaming toward the north, high up in the sky. Harry looked at his watch—it was six o'clock. We were both surprised that the afternoon had passed so quickly. He whistled to Shep and we walked leisurely down the winding mountain trail. We could see our cabin far below beside the river, with the clearing all around it. It was like a picture in a story-book. A flicker beat a lively tattoo on a tree near by, while farther off, a ruffed grouse drummed a greeting to his mate who, perhaps, guarded their young family not far away, and Shep chased a young rabbit that scurried away almost from under our very feet. As the sun slanted its last rays on the mountaintops in the east we reached the foot of the mountain. I had a distinct feeling of elation at having been so far up in the world, and at having caught a glimpse of places far beyond our usual horizon.

## *The Fourth of July*

THE LIBBY FOLKS had decided to have a rousing celebration for the Fourth of July. Yes, sir, they were going to put on the biggest show in the history of the town. There was to be a picnic to begin with, with a speech afterward by the mayor, then foot races and all kinds of contests in the afternoon, and a grand display of fireworks in the evening.

We got an early start to avoid the heat, and decided to cross the river in the boat and walk down the railroad track to avoid a possible wait at the ferry. Flags waved in the summer breeze from every porch, and all the stores were decorated with flags and bunting. The place selected for the picnic was south of town, where in the shade of giant pines long tables were loaded with good things to eat. There were great platters of assorted sandwiches, salads, pickles, pies, and cakes and cookies. A huge pot of steaming coffee, suspended over a brisk fire, sent out an appetizing aroma. A bucket of lemonade, with two long-handled dippers hooked over the edge, was constantly being replenished by the committee ladies. And there was ice cream—free ice cream for everybody—a rare treat indeed in those days.

Next came the speech by the mayor. I can remember the abrupt stillness as he came forward and raised his hand for silence. I don't remember his name, but he did make a good speech about the Declaration of Independence, frequently mopping his brow with a damp handkerchief. When he had finished, several small boys—to relieve their pent-up emotions—started setting off firecrackers at the edge of the crowd.

After the picnic dinner we all went to the main street where the sports and races were to take place. First there was the small boys' race—for boys under twelve. Some ten or twelve boys competed, but before they finally got off they had made three starts, and before reaching the finish line two of them fell down and skinned their knees. The smallest boy in the group won the race—by a small margin. There was much merriment during the sack race, some of the contestants trying to hop and run by turns and getting badly tangled up in their sacks. Others, who had evidently practiced beforehand, hopped right along and won easily. In the three-legged race, where they tied the legs of two boys together, making but three legs for two boys, the two pairs who had practiced beforehand ran a close race while the others made much fun for the crowd with their antics in trying to get to the finish line—falling, then getting up and trying again, only to go sprawling in the road once more.

Next was the fat man's race, in which three of the leading businessmen took part. The two-hundred

pound saloonkeeper was in the lead when he stumbled and nearly fell, giving the butcher and the hotel-keeper a chance to pass him—the butcher winning by a narrow margin.

Then there was the fat ladies' race—for ladies weighing two hundred pounds or more—and this proved to be the most amusing of all. At first there was no response, but in front of the drugstore two ladies were talking—and there was no doubt but that they were eligible for the race.

"Come on, Jenny," said one. "I'll run if you will. Let's go."

"Oh, I don't want us to be the only ones, Grace—let's see who else is going to run first."

"Why, there aren't any others yet," urged Grace. "Let's go. If we start, maybe there'll be others."

"All right, then," said Jenny, and they moved toward the starting line, looking self-consciously from side to side to see how the crowd was taking it.

"Well, my gracious sakes alive," chimed in another lady in the crowd, who seemed as well qualified as the other two, "if those two are going to run, I am, too. Why, it shouldn't be hard to beat either one of them."

"Sure, Emily, go ahead," urged the meek-looking little man by her side. "Go out there and beat 'em."

"Well, of all things," whispered Grace to Jenny. "Look who's coming. If we can't beat Emily I'll miss my guess." And from the other side of the street another generously proportioned lady was seen to step up briskly and join the others.

"Hello, Elsie," said Jenny. "Come right on up. I suppose you think you can beat us, huh?"

"Well," answered Elsie, "I can try."

"Get ready," warned the starter. Then two more ladies hurried forward. "Any more?" asked the starter. "If not, get ready to run now. When I say 'Go,' all start at once. Now, get ready, go! Hold on there—you didn't all start together! What's that? Oh, yes, here, give it to me. Will somebody hold Mrs. Smith's hat, please? Thank you. Now, again, get ready; go! Well, by—— Here, come back; that wasn't fair. Can't you all start together?"

"Why didn't he let us go?" grumbled Emily, who had been in the lead. "I didn't see anything wrong with it."

"There, now, let's try once more, and pay attention!" warned the starter. "Get ready, go!"

This time they all got a pretty even start—puffing and panting as they ran. Then, plop! And Emily, with her two hundred and some odd pounds, fell flat. Her dress didn't stop when she did, but practically flew off over her head, revealing an expanse of black stockings and—— But she wasn't down long. With an angry toss of her head she jumped up and brought up the rear, as much to get out of the way of the spectators as to compete further in the race. While the judges were awarding the prize to Mrs. Smith, and the others were good-naturedly congratulating her, Emily mingled quietly with the crowd and disappeared.

A drilling contest came next—to determine which

of two men, with heavy hammers and drills, could drill a hole through a solid rock in the shortest time. Then came sawing and chopping contests, followed by a horseshoe-pitching contest, interspersed with the popping of firecrackers and the blare of squawkers and tin horns.

The shadows were lengthening, and the children were asking for cookies and lemonade, so most of us went back to our picnic baskets and nibbled on left-over snacks and drank lemonade and coffee, which were still plentiful. At about eight-thirty we watched a beautiful fireworks display on the north side of the river.

Harry and I walked home along the railroad track in the cool of the starlit night, found our boat by the light of the palouser that he had hidden along the track, and rowed across the river, tired but happy after a most interesting day; and we were glad, as always, to get home.

## *We Go Huckleberrying*

THE DAYS WENT BY very quickly now. I made wild gooseberry pies and serviceberry jam from the berries that grew along the river and up on the cliffs—and always there were wild flowers on the table. The garden was coming along well. By the first of August we had new potatoes and peas. The young roosters were growing big and fat. The river was getting lower each day, and the water was now as clear as crystal. Again we could enjoy our boat trips. Sometimes we would take a picnic supper with us at the end of the day, pole up along the bank, have our supper on a grassy slope, and float down at dusk. We would often surprise deer drinking and cavorting at the water's edge. Once we saw a cub bear scramble clumsily up the bank and up over the cliffs.

Then one day we saw that our little field of timothy hay was ready to cut. So Harry took the scythe down from its nail in the woodshed and, sitting on the porch, he honed its blade edge to razor sharpness with the whetstone. Then he walked round and round the field, cutting the fragrant hay. It took several days, but finally it was all down. He

then raked it into shocks with the long-handled rake with wooden tines.

Next came the problem of getting the hay stacked. We borrowed a horse from Sam Micheals. Then we cut tall brush, gathering one end of it together with a rope and tying it securely, and hitching the horse to the other end of the rope. The loose ends of the brush provided a flat surface on which to load the hay. I drove the horse around to the various shocks while Harry pitched the hay onto our improvised wagon—and pitched it off again near the barn, making a stack. We finally finished the job, and we had harvested our first hay crop.

Toward the end of August we made our first trip to the mountains to pick huckleberries. Hoodoo Joe, our neighbor down the river, invited us and Mr. and Mrs. John Leigh and Leslie to go with him, as he knew a place where the berries were plentiful this year. When the day came, we piled our blankets and provisions into his old lumber wagon and climbed in. As the horses jogged along the dusty, stony road, we sweltered in the heat of the blazing sun, finally arriving at the Snowshoe Mine. Sam Micheals, who was the cook at the mine, gave us coffee and doughnuts and showed us around. The mine was in full operation at the time, and the rich ore was being hauled down to Libby by four-horse teams and mule teams.

Someone showed us a cabin where we could stay. For several days we picked huckleberries on the steep



mountainsides around the mine. The bushes were weighted down with the luscious purple fruit.

In the evenings we sat around a big campfire, telling stories and singing old-time songs. Some of the miners came to sit with us, and joined in the fun until late in the night. Sam played his guitar for us and accompanied our singing.

On the last afternoon I became separated from the rest of the party. Hearing a noise in the brush above me on the hillside, I called, thinking it might be one of the party, but received no answer, except a snort and the crashing of brush. A bear! I thought, and I hurried down the mountainside as quickly as possible. I saw nothing of the animal, but I felt very uneasy until I had located other members of our group. Strange to say, I still had my pail of berries; but my sunbonnet was gone. And as far as I know it is still up there.

During the trip home we stopped at the Spencer ranch. Mrs. Spencer came out and invited us to stay for supper. I remember she said she was cooking new turnips as an added inducement to us to stay. Little Leslie Leigh spoke up, saying, "I don't like turnips."

Mrs. Spencer laughed. "Well, bless your heart, Honey. I don't either, but I have some cookies too," she said.

This was much more appealing to Leslie, and he jumped with joy. "Oh, let's stay, Mama," he coaxed, "I'm hungry!" But old Joe was in a hurry to get home, so we didn't stop.

## *Wintertime*

THEN IT WASN'T long before we began to plan an addition to the house. There was to be a baby in January, and we would need more room. Two men were hired, and the work got under way. During September and October we had beautiful autumn weather. To be sure the days were getting shorter, and the evenings brought a chill to the air—a foretaste of winter—but there was still many a boat ride up the river, and many a nice catch of trout in the eddies.

Light frosts had nipped the leaves and turned them to flaming red and gold along the river and up on the slopes behind the cabin. The squirrels were busy all day long gathering pine nuts for their winter stores. Most of the birds had disappeared—only magpies and blue jays and a few late robins remained to quarrel over drying chokecherries and rose haws left hanging among yellowing leaves.

The days became shorter, and as we now had longer evenings Harry taught me how to play cribbage. He usually won easily, but I liked to play, and looked forward to each evening when the supper dishes were finished and Harry would put down

his book or paper, saying, with a twinkle in his eye, "So you want me to beat you again. Well, we'll see."

With the first snowfall in the high country, the miners were beginning to come back from thirty or forty miles up in the mountains to their cabins in the surrounding countryside. A few of the hardier ones were content to put in a grubstake and stay out in solitude, "snowed in," with perhaps only a cat or a dog for company during the long winter. Most of them, however, had a cabin closer in, where they spent the winters, so that they could get to town at least during mild weather.

To this day these cabins may be found up and down the river, along the creeks and up in the gulches. Some are still standing intact despite the snows of innumerable winters and the rains and heat of summer. Others are crumbling ruins, their roofs caved in, partially exposing the remains of a bunk bed, a crude table, a rusty stove and a bench or two. A black coffeepot and a frying pan, red with rust, are usually somewhere about—mute testimony of someone's courage and hope, and finally, failure or success—the ghost of a little home.

The miners began to drop in now with samples of ore for Harry to assay. He would crush a piece of the ore fine, put it in a gold pan and take it to the river and wash it until there was nothing left except a little black sand with perhaps—and everything depended on this—more or less glittering dust particles that would not wash out of the pan. Then Harry, having weighed the stone in the first place,

weighed the tiny dust particles on a fine sensitive pair of scales, and with some calculating on a scratch pad he could tell just how much gold this ore contained.

Sometimes a neighbor, on his way home from town, stopped in with our mail. That was one of the customs of the country. If one were going by any other cabin on his way home from town, he brought along the mail. Or they would sometimes stop on their way into town and find out if we needed anything from town—especially “terbacky.”

No one ever locked his cabin door in those days. Anyone who came along and was hungry was welcome to stop in and eat—whether or not the owner were at home. There was always the “makings” of a meal—bacon, flour, coffee and beans—and usually a supply of kindling to start a quick fire.

This story is told of a young man who became lost in the woods. He wandered around in search of the road until darkness overtook him just when he came to a cabin. No one answered to his knock, so he walked in. No one was there, so, being tired and hungry, he cooked himself a meal. Still no one returned, so he went to bed. In the morning he made the fire and started to make hot cakes for breakfast. There was the usual sour-dough bucket on the little shelf behind the stove, and hanging on a nail he found the griddle, but he could not find the grease can. Finally he discovered what looked like grease in a can on the table. It worked fine, too, and he had a good breakfast.

He had just finished washing the dishes and was about to start out again, to try to locate the trail which would lead him to the road, when the owner of the cabin returned. He was old and grizzled, with a white beard brown with tobacco stain, and he walked with a stick.

"Hello," he called, as he caught sight of his visitor. "Be ye lost?"

"Yes," answered the young fellow, "I got turned around some way, and as night was coming on, I stayed here and made myself at home."

"Fine, fine, friend. Al'as glad to help a man out," and he sat down heavily on the bed. "Danged rumatiz gettin' me down, I guess—missed mu salve last night. Stayed with a fellow up the gulch—got to playing cards—too late to come home—so I stayed. Rumatiz worse this morning, too. Here's the best thing for mu aching old bones I ever see. Yes, sir." And he reached over to the table where his medicine usually stood. "Oh, yes, yes, I must'u moved it. Oh, here it is. Consarn it, up here behind the stove. I must'u forgot to put it back on the table last time I warmed it up. Yes, sir, this here is the best rumatiz medicine I ever see. Ye take a handful of grub worms and a little grease and fry 'em out in a frying pan, an' yu got the finest salve for rumatiz you can find. Hey, what's your hurry? May as well stay and have some dinner with me."

"No, thanks," said his visitor, bolting for the door. "I've got to be going. Good-by."

The evenings were getting longer now, and sometimes one or more of our neighbors would accept our invitation to stay for supper, and then sit and visit or play cards until late in the evening.

We moved part of the furniture out of the kitchen to the new part of the house, and added a few new pieces. This gave us more room and we felt ever so rich. A few of our good neighbors (we were neighbors even though we might live as much as two or three miles apart) came and helped Harry put in a supply of wood for the winter. Our potatoes and other vegetables were stored away in the root cellar. Then in November we got a real foretaste of winter. Clouds gathered thick and black, driven by a cold, bleak wind out of the northeast, and fine snow sifted down through the bare limbs of the birch and cottonwood. Shep scratched at the door to be let in. He looked pleadingly up at us when Harry opened the door, and settled himself comfortably before the open fire which crackled and blazed in a riot of sparkling good cheer.

By nightfall the storm broke in all its fury. The wind howled around the cabin in fierce gusts of swirling snow. We stayed up until midnight, playing cribbage and throwing on more wood as the fire burned down, listening to the raging of the wind as it tore at the roof, blowing down through the chimney at times, driving the smoke into the room, then drawing it up again through the black funnel to mingle with the fierce gale.

In the morning the wind had died down and we

awoke to a beautiful white world—cold and crisp. Great patches of slush floated gently down the river. A hungry sparrow flew against the window, then recovered his balance and flew to a chokecherry tree where a few dried cherries still clung to the bare branches. It was bitter cold, and our little home by the river was caught in the first blizzard of the winter.

## *Harry Gets Pneumonia*

SHORTLY AFTER Thanksgiving, tragedy threatened to darken our world. Harry was up early, as usual, that morning—had started the fires and had put the coffee on to boil. Then he called me, saying that he didn't feel well. I arose at once and saw that his face was flushed and pinched-looking. His forehead was hot and damp. "You'll have to go back to bed," I urged. "I'll bring you a cup of coffee, and you'll feel better." Before he could get ready for bed he had a severe chill which left him pale and weak. I put an extra blanket over him, a hot salt bag at his feet, and coaxed him to drink his coffee. Soon the chill passed, and he was burning up with fever. That night he seemed to be in a coma. I didn't dare go to sleep—I stayed by his side—arousing him at times and giving him small doses of ginger tea and red-pepper tea. The next morning he seemed a little better—but his breathing was labored, and we decided that we would somehow have to get medical assistance. There was no doctor in Libby, but the druggist would surely know what to do—if we could only get word to him. Hoodoo Joe, our nearest neighbor, lived across the



river and two miles toward town. Could I walk to his place through the snow and ice, and have him go into town? There was no other way. So I put on a warm coat, overshoes, a wool scarf over my head, and started out. Harry pressed my hand as we parted, whispering, "Be careful, dear. Take care of yourself. When you cross the river, carry a long pole with you in case you should break through the ice."

I called to Shep, and we hurried down the road, through the woods, the snow crunching underfoot. It was a cold, clear day. When we came opposite old Joe's cabin, I looked about for a suitable pole and finally found one to my liking. Picking my way down the riverbank, I ventured out onto the ice. Shep looked inquiringly up into my face, then wagged his tail and came along. I could hear the water gurgling under my feet, and had a moment of fear when I thought of the depth of the river under this rough covering of ice and snow. I was carrying the pole horizontally in front of me as Harry had instructed. I dared not look to the right or the left, but hurried along, Shep following close behind, until we reached the opposite shore. There was a hole chopped in the ice where Joe had dipped water for his household use, and I could see that the ice was only four or five inches thick. I breathed a sigh of relief as I threw down the pole and clambered up the path to his cabin.

Old Joe was surprised to see me, and he knew at once that there was something wrong when he

answered my knock at his door. He told me to come in and sit down, and then asked anxiously, "Something wrong, ma'am?"

"Yes, Joe, Harry is sick, awfully sick, and I want you to go into town and have Doc Saily give us something to help him."

He listened attentively as I described the symptoms of his illness. He looked at me and shook his head. "Hard trip for you, wa'n't it? Sure, I'll go right in—bring you some medicine tonight."

"Oh, thank you, Joe. Now I must get right back home. I promised Harry I would be back in four hours."

"Now, ma'am, you're a bit winded yet. You set a while, and I'll fix you a cup o' coffee. There you are—here's sugar and here's a can o' milk. I got some bread here, too. Ye gotta' sop it in the coffee a little—made it two, three days ago."

"Thank you, Joe. I'm not hungry, but I will have some coffee."

He busied himself with his packsack and his Mackinaw while I rested briefly. The strong, hot coffee made me feel better, and I thanked him and hurried off. The old man watched me as I crossed the river, and we waved to each other as I reached the opposite shore. Then I saw him turn and walk swiftly toward town.

Hurrying through the dark woods I was spurred on by fear—fear of what I might find when I reached home. Shep leaped happily up the road ahead of me, looking back occasionally to make sure that I

was coming. Clouds were gathering in the west, and it was growing darker. Then I reached the clearing at the edge of the woods, and I could see our cabin. As I opened the door I heard a feeble cough. I leaned over the bed, and Harry raised up on one elbow, putting out his hand to me. "I was sorry I let you go, dear. I was worried all the while you were gone. How did you make out? It didn't take you long—it's only three hours since you left. You didn't run, did you?"

"No, I didn't run," I answered, "but I didn't waste any time, either. Old Joe is going into town right away, and he will bring some medicine from Doc Saily as soon as he can. He'll be hungry, so I'll cook supper for him."

I rekindled the fire in the cookstove, put on the teakettle, and threw another chunk of wood on the smoldering fire in the fireplace. When the water boiled I made tea and toast, and took it to the bedside, coaxing Harry to try a little. To please me, he drank a cup of tea and ate a little toast. My trip in the bracing air had given me an appetite. I had two cups of tea and ate the toast for which Harry had no desire. I spoke words of encouragement to Harry, assuring him Old Joe would soon arrive. "Try to sleep, now," I urged. But he didn't sleep; he tossed and moaned, and had difficulty in breathing, and his lips were blue.

I heard footsteps crunching in the snow, and met Old Joe as he labored up the path to the house.

There was frost around his bearded mouth, and his wrinkled face was grave.

"Howdy, ma'am," he said, sadly. "It's no use—the young fellow's gonna' die—Doc says so—he's got numony."

"For heaven's sake, Joe, don't let Harry hear you say that. Did you bring anything?"

"Yuh, I made him give me everything he had that might help—I knowed you'd wanta' try anyway."

I could feel the blood draining from my face, and a cold chill crept down my spine. "Oh, no," I thought, "this can't be; God wouldn't let him die. Our baby will be here in little more than a month—I cannot let Harry die." Steeling myself against my fear, I put my fingers to my lips, saying, "Harry is going to get well, Joe; I'm sure of it."

Joe looked at my stricken face, which belied my words, and nodded assent.

We entered the cabin together, and Old Joe let the packsack slide from his shoulders. "Here is Joe, Harry. He has brought the medicine and everything we need to make you well. Let's see, now, what's this? Lemons, flaxseed meal, pills. Are there any directions, Joe?"

"Oh, I 'most forgot," and Joe, fumbling in his shirt pocket, brought out a piece of paper containing instructions for making the poultices and giving the pills, stating that the patient's food should consist of soup and hot lemonade, with a final note: "Keep hot poultices on chest constantly and let him

drink all the lemonade he wants. But it's no use; he's got pneumonia."

"Sit down, Joe," I said. "Supper will be ready soon."

"Yes, ma'am, thank ye." Joe took a look at the sick man on the bed and shook his head. "Pretty sick, hey, young fellow? But you'll be all right now," he added, catching my eye.

"I don't feel so good, Joe, but I'll be up and around in no time, now, with your help."

I set to work at once. First I gave Harry two of the little pills. Then I made a hot poultice of the flaxseed meal, applying it to his chest. He winced and said "Ouch," then closed his eyes and settled down drowsily. I finished preparing supper, and sat down with the old man, talking with him in undertones as we ate the boiled venison ribs, boiled potatoes and carrots, and pickled beets. I got up occasionally to look at my patient. He was not sleeping, but was quiet, and he followed me with his eyes as I smoothed the covers up over his shoulders and patted his flushed cheek with my fingers.

The meal over, Old Joe sat by the fire, smoking his corncob pipe, watching me as I put the food away and washed the dishes. "Is that there for the dog?" he asked, indicating a plate of scraps on the table. I nodded. He got up, and taking the plate of scraps he emptied them in Shep's dish at the back door. Setting down the empty plate, he inspected the wood box. Then he stepped outside, and I heard him splitting wood. He filled the wood box, then

brought in some chunks for the fireplace, piling them near the door, and brought in a big armful of kindlings, which he put under the cookstove. That done, he pulled a chair up near the stove, sat down, and, taking a sharp knife from his pocket, began cutting shavings from the kindlings beneath the stove. He kept on until he had a big pile of the curling shavings, so helpful in starting the fire quickly in the mornings. He took the two pails from the bench beside the door, and filled them at the river. Then he put on his cap and Mackinaw, slung his empty packsack over one shoulder, and left, saying, "I'll be moseyin' along now. Be over tomorrow to see how yer comin'. Anything you want from town, I'll git it."

"Thank you, Joe, I certainly do appreciate this. Everything is going to be all right now, I'm sure."

I made another poultice, replacing the one on Harry's chest. All night I sat in the rocking chair beside the bed, changing the poultices frequently. Sometimes Harry seemed to be sleeping, but the rasping quality of his breathing, and the occasional low moan, kept me alert and fearful.

The next morning, after coaxing Harry to sip a little coffee and some broth, I went out and fed the chickens, broke the ice out of their water pan, and filled it with fresh water. The trees and bushes were covered with new snow, and it was still snowing. Returning to the cabin I changed the poultice, fluffed the pillows, and lay down to try to catch a little sleep.

I must have slept for an hour or more. I was suddenly awakened by the stomping of feet and a knocking at the door. There was Old Joe, with another man, Eli Poesnecker.

"Howdy ma'am," said Joe. "I brung Eli over. He'll set with the young feller tonight."

Eli was a tall, dark-complexioned man in his early thirties. "How do you do, Mrs. Boothman," he said. "I thought if I could be of any help, I'd give you a hand. How is Harry this morning?"

"Oh, I'm surely glad you came. Harry seems to feel a little better this morning—of course he usually does feel better in the morning. His chest is practically cooked from those hot poultices."

They shook the snow off their coats on the porch and brought them in, hanging them on a hook behind the door.

I put on the coffeepot and soon had lunch ready for the men. Joe broke trail to the water hole in the river, widened the hole with the ax, and brought in two pails full of water. Then, after asking me if there was anything I needed, and assuring me that he would be back the next day, he started home.

All through the night Eli sat reading and attending to Harry's every need. I lay on the cot in the kitchen, fully dressed, alert for every little noise. I got up several times when I heard Eli changing the hot poultices or filling Harry's glass with fresh lemonade. Then, through the kitchen window, I could see the sky lightening in the east. The snowing had ceased. I took over at Harry's bedside, and

Eli slept a little during the day, and was to stay for another night.

The days went by, each a repetition of the one before. There was not much change except that I feared Harry was getting gradually weaker—although in the mornings he seemed a little brighter. The news had gotten around that Harry was sick, and we had many offers of help. Sam Micheals came out and sat up with him for two nights; also Jack Kearney, Red Davis, and others. The faithful Joe came every day, his packsack filled with groceries and anything I needed from town. He made reports to the druggist, and came away with more pills, more flaxseed meal, and more of the same pessimistic predictions.

Then it was Eli's turn again. It was ten days since the beginning of Harry's illness. And he seemed worse—he was very restless, and the rasping in his throat was alarming. Eli told me that I'd better go to bed—he knew that I was worn out with worry and lack of sleep. But I could not get away. I had been holding Harry's hand in mine, and when I tried to disengage my hand, he tightened his grip. I was frightened. Was he dying? I looked at Eli and saw that he was frightened, too. He again urged me to go to bed, but I knew that I must stay with Harry. I stroked his brow with one hand, still holding his hand with the other. I could not let him go.

Hour after hour I remained with him as he seemed to waver between life and death. Then in the middle of the night he fell asleep. Or was this the end? No,



his breathing was quiet, but it was there—regular and relaxed. My head dropped to the pillow beside his for a moment of rest—and I, too, was asleep. Eli must have removed my shoes and covered me up with the blankets. When I awoke it was daylight, and I could hear the rooster crowing. Eli was in the kitchen. He had started the fire and was putting the coffee on to boil. I could hear Harry breathing easily, and I turned toward him just as he opened his eyes and smiled at me. Yes, he actually smiled, saying, "I've been very sick, my dear, but I'm going to be all right now. I'm hungry."

Eli came in and looked at the sick man. "Feeling better, young feller?" he asked.

"Yes, Eli, I feel much better. I don't know how I'm ever going to repay you and the other fellows for all you have done for us."

"Oh, that's all right. Take it easy, now, and we'll have you out of that bed in no time."

Harry recovered rapidly, and soon we were planning our first Christmas. Before his illness we had intended to have all the bachelors in the community over for a Christmas party, but now we wondered whether that would be wise. We talked it over, and at last I convinced Harry that I was feeling fine and would be glad to have the party for his friends. "Anyhow," I added, "we have already asked some of them, and I really won't go to very much trouble." So we decided to go ahead with plans for the Christmas dinner party, now only a week off. The faithful old Hoodoo Joe brought extra

groceries from town—bulging packsacks full. And I was busy for days making mince pies, fruitcakes, and cookies.

At last the big day arrived. We even had a Christmas tree in a corner of the room, trimmed with popcorn and cranberry chains and with brightly colored candles. We were up early, and as soon as breakfast was over I made the plum pudding, Harry meanwhile preparing the turkey for stuffing. Then the pudding was boiling and the turkey was in the oven, plump and fat. Harry kept up the fire and peeled the potatoes while I prepared other vegetables and poured more water on the pudding from time to time to keep it covered. Then I would peek into the oven occasionally to note the progress of the turkey and to baste it with gravy with the long-handled spoon.

Now the guests began to arrive—those goodhearted, generous bachelors—some on horseback, most of them on foot. They stomped the snow from their feet and came in with cold red noses and tingling fingers. As they came close to the stove to warm their hands they sniffed the air appreciatively. They had each brought us a Christmas gift.

"I brung you a little Christmas present," said Old Joe, shyly, handing me a package done up in red paper sprinkled with silver stars.

"Oh, for me?"

"Yeh, fer you and Harry."

"Thank you, Joe. I wonder what it is. Oh, a lovely salad bowl—just what I wanted."

"A which? Oh, yes, salad bowl. I didn't know what it was for, but I figgered maybe it'd do for berries or applesass or somethin' a' that kind."

"Yes, there are many things that I can use it for, Joe," I added enthusiastically. How in the world did you happen to pick it out?"

"Wal," he answered with a mysterious, self-satisfied grin, "I was young once m'self, and I knows purty well what the ladies like—I ain't fergot."

One by one they brought their gifts, shyly and hesitatingly, and I chatted with them and tried to put them at ease. All these outwardly rough fellows, with hearts of gold, had brought something for us, but much as they tried to hide it, it was little short of torture for them to present their gifts.

At last the turkey was pronounced done to a turn. The pudding, with much splashing of hot water and burning of fingers, was turned out on a platter and put into the oven to "set." The table was beautiful with our wedding silver and dishes, with a tablecloth and napkins of snowy white linen, and it was piled high with delicious food—our first Christmas dinner—and best of all it was shared with our many good friends. For this special occasion these men all wore clean shirts, and a few even wore ties. It turned out to be a jolly party—the men for the most part "thawing out" and telling many witty stories. It was a dinner such as these lonely men had not enjoyed for many a day, and I was flushed with pride as I looked into their happy, honest faces. They had all helped in Harry's recent illness, and

I considered them the most wonderful people in all the world.

When dinner was finished the men all helped with the dishes and the general cleaning up, brought in wood and carried pails of water from the river. Then we sat around the little Christmas tree, its candles lighted, eating nuts and candy and telling stories, until one by one our guests got into their Mackinaws, caps, and mittens, lit up their palousers, and departed, each to his own lonely cabin.

## *A Baby in the House*

AN OLD LADY, Mrs. Zimmer, had come out from Libby to stay with us—an old lady wise with experience and a life full of service.

We were caught in the icy grip of winter. The icebound river was still. Snow, which had accumulated during several severe storms, was piled high over the landscape. The cabin roof held two feet or more, and deep-cut paths led from the porch to the woodshed and down the riverbank to the water hole. Snow was packed down in another trail leading back of the house and across the clearing to the road into town. Pine and fir trees were festooned and weighed down with fresh loads of glistening whiteness, and they looked like sentinel ghosts in the silent world. Bushes, huge boulders, and tree stumps were undistinguishable mounds, flashing and sparkling in the early-morning rays of a glaring sunrise. The thermometer stood at thirty below zero and the air was so still that the blue-gray smoke from the chimney rose straight up to mingle with the steel-blue of the winter sky. Glistening sparks of frozen vapor sifted silently down to add more luster to the dazzling scene. The most breathless

stillness was all around, held in a magic grip by nature's artistry.

It was the fifth of January. Our little cabin, almost hidden by a mound of snow, was cozy and warm inside. All night Harry and Mrs. Zimmer had been busy. I could see tiny garments hung up by the stove to warm, and Mrs. Zimmer came to me from time to time with words of encouragement. "Everything is fine; just a little longer now."

"Oh, I can't stand it," I told her. "I hadn't thought it would be like this."

"There, there, now; everything is going to be all right."

"No, it isn't. Oh—"

Then, suddenly, out of an age of agony, the pain ceased, and I heard a gurgling, sharp cry, and Mrs. Zimmer said quietly, "It's a boy." Too tired to stir, I rested in sweet comfort, satisfied just to lie still.

Harry came and stroked back my hair and kissed my cheek. "My poor girl," he said. "But everything is all right, and we have a fine son."

An hour later, Mrs. Zimmer tiptoed to the bed, and finding me awake, laid in my arms a warm little bundle, and I knew that this was my supreme moment—when I held in my arms my first baby.

"He is a fine, nine-pound boy," she said.

Fitfully I dozed through the rest of the night, sleepily aware of the voices of Mrs. Zimmer and Harry as they talked in undertones and busied themselves with various tasks. The quietness outside was broken occasionally by sharp reports, like rifle shots,

as the logs in the cabin walls cracked from the severe cold.

When morning dawned, clear and cold, Harry put on his heavy coat, cap, and mittens, and I could hear the crunching of the snow as he brought in armloads of wood and icy pails of water.

The new life, with a baby in the house, was fuller and better, and I tingled with pride and happiness. Most first babies are wonderful, but it would be hard to find a more wonderful and happy baby than our chubby little Willy—or at least I thought so. There was so much to be done now, and I was always busy. If the baby slept too long, I would tiptoe over to see if he still breathed; if he cried, he must be sick, and I would turn him over on my lap and pat him gently to sleep.

It was a long, severe winter, but I didn't notice it—I was too busy. Harry was kept on the go with winter chores—keeping the house warm—taking care of the chickens. He was clumsy with the baby, but proudly exhibited him to the neighbors who stopped in frequently during mild weather to inquire if we needed anything from town, or to leave our mail on their way from town. Groceries for the most part were no problem as we had laid in a supply for the winter, but there were always the mail and newspapers. And then, of course, these men were curious, and wanted to see the new baby. Most of them had not seen such a young baby at close hand for many years. They would tiptoe around and poke a finger under his little chin to make him laugh.

George McKay declared, "He looks just like his ma, Harry—redheaded, too," and he insisted on calling him Pat. Red Davis said the baby was a towhead. And another of our visitors said he couldn't tell what the color of his hair was—"He ain't got no hair, nohow." In spite of all the good-natured kidding, they all agreed that he was a mighty fine boy.



## *Spring Showers*

WHEN THE WARM sunshine of spring came again I took Willy out for fresh air every day. From the time the first wild buttercups bloomed in April we had flowers on the table—dogtooth violets (which are not violets at all, but lilies—glacier lilies), red shooting stars, yellow spring daisies, and shy purple wood violets. With Willy in my arms I searched for them eagerly. And no less eagerly I gathered the first radishes and young onions from our little garden. Willy took his morning and afternoon naps on the shady porch while I went about my household tasks or tended the garden close by, or rocked and sewed by his side—both of us happy and contented.

Harry had managed, with the help of Slim Fredericks, to get some land cleared in the fall, so our land under cultivation was a little larger this year, and we were planning to put in some wheat for chicken feed. The crops promised to be fairly good. If blossoms are a promise, we would have apples, plums, and cherries this summer from our young orchard—the trees having been literally covered with

blooms. Our chickens, and a clutch of young turkeys, were also doing well.

It was June. For several days the heat had been oppressive. Then one afternoon white thunderclouds appeared all around the horizon, and the air became cool. As night drew near, Harry decided to start a little fire in the fireplace. It burned briskly for a time, dispelling the dampness in the air, and it was cozy sitting before the open flames once again. As the fire burned itself out, and the embers fell apart, raindrops began to fall on the roof, and it finally settled into a steady downpour. Harry got up, raked the scattered coals together, put on more wood, and brought the fire back to life. We had both been dozing—it was easy to doze there by the fire—lulled by the patter of the rain on the roof and the dripping from the eaves.

All night it rained, and when morning dawned, it was still raining steadily and persistently—a fine drizzle. Water stood in puddles in the yard and in hollows in the field. The clean, young leaves on trees and shrubs trembled in the steady drizzle. Robins, wet and bedraggled, pulled slender earthworms from the softened soil and flew off to sheltered nests flushed with gaping fledglings. Out in the chicken yard, baby chicks came from under mother hens, cheeping plaintively at the cold, wet world, and wet turkeys had to be brought into the house and warmed up in a wool-lined basket by the kitchen stove.

By noon the rain had ceased, and a shy, halfhearted sun came out fitfully from behind scattered clouds.

Raindrops trembled on leaves and grass blades, and myriads of birds appeared, hungry and merry, twittering busily about the trees and bushes, eagerly discovering tempting tidbits in a rain-washed world. The mother hens scratched and hunted for insects and stray water-soaked grains of wheat that were soon gobbled up by alert little chicks—and a tug of war was in progress as two chicks discovered the same worm at the same time. Eventually the luckless creature was pulled in two, and each chick had his share. As the sun grew warmer, each mother hen scratched a hollow in the warm, damp earth, and nestled there, with her wings spread out, while the little chicks lay all around, and on her wide-spread wings, basking happily.

One day, when Harry had gone to town, I was washing up the lunch dishes after having put Willy to sleep and laid him in his little crib. The kitchen was suddenly darkened, and I looked up to see an Indian peering in at me through the window, completely shutting out the light as he put his arms up over his head to see what was inside. I was momentarily frightened—his appearance being so sudden. Apparently satisfied with what he had seen, he left as quickly as he had appeared. Then, a moment later, I heard the soft pad, pad, of his moccasined feet on the porch as he came toward the door. The rattling of the doorknob told me that he intended to come in. What should I do—lock the door? But people in this part of the country never lock their

doors—there wasn't even a lock on the door—so I couldn't have locked it had I wanted to.

This wasn't the day of the tomahawk and war paint anyway, I reasoned, so, if I was afraid, I wasn't going to let him know it. "Hello, John," I said, as he entered the cabin. "What do you want?" My courage was not genuine, but I hoped it was convincing.

"Me want eat," he said, pointing to the table where the bread and butter and teapot still remained from lunch.

"All right," I said. "You sit down there and I'll get you something to eat." And I prepared to fry some venison and warm over some potatoes for him.

"Coffee!" he said, as he pointed to the coffeepot on the shelf behind the stove.

"Oh, you want coffee, too, do you? All right, John." I was feeling more at ease now, and I took down the coffeepot and put it on the stove with fresh coffee and hot water from the teakettle. I did wish he would sit down—but he didn't. He kept watching me as I prepared his meal.

He was at least six feet tall. He walked around the room, looking at everything and picking things up and examining them, but always putting them back—and always keeping an eye on me. Finally he came to Harry's tobacco on the mantelshelf. "Me smoke," he said. And I went over and gave him some of the tobacco in a little sack, fearing that if I didn't, he might be tempted to take it all. But he did not take anything that was not given to him.

When the meal was ready, I told him to sit down and eat. He ate like a starved man, but not being able to eat everything that I had put on the table for him, he brought out a cloth sack from under his red and green blanket, put the remaining bread and meat in it, and tucked it back out of sight. Then, taking up the knife that he had been eating with, he felt of its edge. Shaking his head, he stepped up to the mantelshelf and, picking up a whetstone, he began to sharpen the knife, feeling of the edge from time to time. Finally, with a grunt of satisfaction, he put the whetstone down. Then, picking up the fork and spoon, together with the knife, he started to put all three of them into the sack with the food.

"Here," I said, "those aren't yours."

"Hu, no, you give me, no?"

"Just to eat with, John."

He thought about that a moment, then put the things back on the table. "You got fishhook," he asked, looking along the shelf.

"All right," I said. "I'll give you some fishhooks," and I opened a little box in the corner. He held out both hands for the whole box, but I selected several hooks and some line, giving them to him. Then he looked around again.

"Where you man?" he asked.

"Oh, he's over there on the hillside, cutting wood," I lied. "He'll be home soon." I wasn't quite so brave now.

"Hu, you papoose?" he asked, looking at Willy asleep in his crib.

"Yes," I laughed, "my papoose."

Then, apparently satisfied, he opened the door and left as quietly as he had come. I had not even heard Shep bark, and I don't think he did. I wondered afterward if Indians had a way with dogs, or if dogs had a way with Indians—or perhaps he was too frightened to bark.

When Harry came home that evening, I told him about my visitor. He laughed and asked if I wasn't frightened.

"No," I lied. "Not much, but he wanted everything he saw."

"Yes," said Harry, "they sometimes get pretty nervy. He probably guessed that you were a little frightened."

"Do you think they would hurt a person?" I asked.

"No, I don't think so. They are afraid to harm anyone. They know very well that if they make any trouble it will mean plenty of trouble for them."

"He even tried to take the table silver that I gave him to eat with," I added.

"Yes," laughed Harry, "and if you had let him he would have taken the dishes too. Whatever you put on the table for them they consider theirs."

"Well, anyway," I said, "he didn't get them."

## *Child-Raising Problems*

WILLY COULD NOW sit up in a box, with a pillow at his back, and take notice of the world around him. Putting him in a shady place, I would hoe in the garden or gather vegetables or strawberries while Shep lay near by to keep an eye on the baby. Then Willy surprised me one day by trying to stand up in his little box. The attempt might have been successful had he not tumbled clear out, headfirst. Shep, on guard as usual, gave a sharp bark, and I ran to him, knowing something was wrong. The baby gave a quick gasp, but did not cry. He rolled over on his stomach and, before I could reach him, grabbed a handful of soft earth and put it into his mouth. He seemed to be enjoying this new gritty substance when I picked him up. I reached into his mouth with my index finger and got most of it out; then, scolding and kissing him by turns, I wiped his mouth out and gave him a drink of water. I put him back into his box and gave him his rattle, which he promptly threw away, then started to cry. When he saw that I wasn't going to pick him up again, he grabbed the edge of the box and tried to pull himself up. Shep was watching, prancing excitedly around the

box. Poor little Willy. He had had a taste of old Mother Earth and adventure, and he was not going to be happy in his box any longer—he was going to see more of the world.

The next day I put on his little moccasins and blue rompers and set him down right on the ground in the potato patch. Of course the first thing he did was to get a handful of dirt and start to put it in his mouth, but before he could accomplish this, I took his hand and spat it a little—I was going to teach my son to have some sense! Again he picked up a handful of dirt; and again I spat his hand. But it was no use. I thought, "What do you do in a case like this? How do you teach babies to act like human beings?" I decided to take him in the house for his nap.

The next day I took an old quilt, spread it out, and set little Willy down on it. He rolled around and played on the quilt for a long while. When he got too near the edge, Shep barked, and I came and put the baby back in the middle. It wasn't long until the bark of the dog was a signal to the baby to get back out of the dirt. And he finally learned not to put the dirt in his mouth. Then, whenever we worked in the potato patch, we took him along in his rompers, sunbonnet, and moccasins. He usually pulled off his sunbonnet and the moccasins, too, and he delighted in sticking his little bare toes into the warm, soft earth.

One day when I was giving little Willy a drink of water there was a click as though he had bit into



the edge of the glass. I felt in his mouth with my finger. I thought so—a tooth! I picked him up and ran out to the garden to show Harry. "The baby's got a tooth," I called, excitedly.

"A tooth?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir, a tooth—look there. See it?" And I held the baby up and opened his mouth with my finger.

Harry peered in. I don't think he saw the tooth, but he said, "Well, I declare. He has, sure enough." I went on describing how I had discovered the new tooth. We both decided that our baby had accomplished quite a feat.

One day we took him to town to have his picture taken. Of course he didn't want to sit in the chair; he wanted to get down on the floor. But the photographer was finally able to get a photograph.

Most of the first summer, as I remember it, when we were not out of doors, Willy lay in his crib of a morning in the middle of the kitchen, watching me at my work or cuddled down asleep with his thumb in his mouth. If I washed dishes, he was fascinated by the tinkle of the silver in the dishpan. And when I washed clothes I had the tub where he could see me, as he would laugh and crow at the splashing of the suds as I rubbed the clothes up and down on the washboard. He would lie all the while on his back, reaching for his toes. When we were both tired, I would pick him up and nurse him and rock him, sitting on the porch where I could look out over the calm river, or, later in the autumn, enjoy the cozy warmth of the fireside.

We still had our impromptu boat rides up the river. I held the baby in my lap as we drifted down at dusk, observing the life about us—the splash of a fish, the scurrying of a muskrat into the water, the shy movements of a deer on the bank, or the swift flight of an eagle as he swooped and sailed gracefully along, high up in the sky.

In those days the game was very plentiful, and some people took advantage of it. Some men came one day with a team and wagon, and as the road ended at our place, they tied the horses there, letting them eat hay from the back of the wagon while they went hunting. At nightfall they returned from the mountainside loaded down with blue grouse—literally a wagonload. And when the river was covered with ice many men came from town to stay with their bachelor acquaintances and hunt deer. Ten, fifteen, or twenty deer were not an unusual number for a man to kill on one of these trips. Having made their kill, they used a horse to drag them to the river on the snow. Then, tying them together, one behind the other, they dragged them on the ice—sometimes fifteen or twenty deer in a string. Arriving at their destination, they skinned the animals, stretching the hides on the sides of buildings or on large trees to dry. They used the meat in various ways—some was smoked, some was cut into thin strips and dried by hanging it on the rafters of the cabins, and some was cured in barrels of brine, which made it into something similar to corned beef. And of course during the cold winter weather the

meat, if frozen, could be kept fresh for some weeks.

Too, in those days, hundreds of deer were killed each year merely for their hides, which were worth about fifty cents apiece. The procedure was to skin the animals where they fell, taking only the hides and leaving the carcasses for the wild animals to devour.

The miners, having come down from the mountains for the winter, would drop in on us from time to time and exclaim about how little Willy had grown, and about the various changes that had taken place during their absence all summer long. George McKay observed that "Pat" was growing like a weed, that his hair was still red—as he knew it would be—that he had a pug nose, and that he never had seen a young'un grow like Pat did. But he seemed to be afraid of the baby; he never picked him up.

By Thanksgiving the men were all down at their winter cabins, and we invited them for a big dinner. As usual, most of them brought candy and nuts and little tokens of their appreciation. I sang for them, and played dance music on the harmonica, which made their eyes sparkle and their feet tap to the time of the music.

For our second Christmas I went to Missoula to show off our baby to friends and relatives. When we returned—Willy and I—he was nearly a year old, and he was beginning to walk. To be sure, he took many a tumble—sometimes bumping his head and sometimes sitting down hard on his fat little bottom—but he was always ready for another try.

Our neighbors still brought out our mail, and some of them, upon receiving a letter, would bring it to Harry to read to them, and to pen a reply. He even carried on a romance or two that resulted in a new bride settling among us. On one such occasion Harry lent the bridegroom one of his white shirts and a tie for the wedding.

Often that winter Sam Micheals would come over for the evening, bringing his guitar, and would play chords to accompany my singing. Then he taught me to play chords and to play the Spanish fandango. Harry surprised me one day by presenting me with a new guitar. He apparently had approved of my efforts.

And so the second winter passed, and again spring was in the air. I went about my work lightheartedly, singing and whistling as I worked at my many chores. We put in the garden, set broody hens, and inspected the orchard—pruning where necessary and spraying for blight. The trees were loaded with fruit buds, and we looked forward to having more fruit this year than the previous one. Willy toddled around after me now, but I had to watch him every minute—he had taken a great liking for water, and if it rained and left puddles, he not only walked through them but delighted in sitting down right in the biggest puddle he could find. He was fascinated by the river, and as it was high now and reached almost to the top of the bank, within a few feet of our porch, we decided we must build a fence around the house.

We had planted an apple tree in the corner of the yard. To make it thrive we were in the habit of throwing wash water around it. Willy delighted in playing here—it was his favorite mud puddle. We had to do something about that, too, so we planted a lawn.

When the river was high and muddy, the water was unfit for drinking, so Harry went to the Mitchell Gulch spring each evening to get our drinking water. I sometimes took the baby and went along. One evening, while waiting for Harry to fill the pails, I discovered a tiny hummingbird's nest being built. It was suspended from a slender young maple limb hanging over the water. We sat and watched the little birds as they darted in and out with tiny bits of dried grass and thistledown, adding the finishing touches to the airy little nest. We watched the progress of the nest building each evening for several days—then all activity ceased. We were careful not to disturb the little birds. Finally we were rewarded for our patience—we could see the busy parents darting about bringing specks of food to their nest—the little ones had hatched. Then one evening we saw a tiny bird, no bigger than a bumblebee, at the edge of the nest. It popped back in when it saw us, but not before we had our first good view of a young hummingbird.

Ben Thomas lived about a mile up the river from us, at the mouth of Rainy Creek. He had been a hardware salesman, but had tired of that and had decided to settle on this pretty little place, which

sloped down to the river. He had planted fruit trees and berry bushes, and had put in lawn grass over a wide area. Farther up the gulch he had prospected and found some good-looking quartz that carried copper and a trace of gold. He found zonolite, too, but thought it was mica.

He built another cabin about a mile up the gulch and carried on his prospecting for a time. He collected enough fine ore specimens to make a good showing, and managed to get some capitalists to back him so that he could develop the property, and he put up a cookhouse and a bunkhouse near his upper cabin. For a time he employed some twenty men, and had a thriving mining camp in operation. But, like so many mining ventures, this one petered out and closed down.

Then Ben moved back to his cabin at the mouth of the creek. The window sills were filled with glittering samples of ore, and a large fireplace added to the attraction of the place. His lawn was well kept, and around a large boulder was a deep pool, fed by a branch of the creek, in which he kept a dozen or more large speckled trout. The slope to the river was planted to many kinds of fruit trees—apples, pears, plums and cherries. Wild grouse feasted on the currants from his bushes, and the birds built many nests in his fruit trees. One day he came upon a stag that had been wounded. After Ben treated the wound the stag recovered and Ben put a bell on its neck and turned it loose. For several

years the animal returned for a handout every winter when the snow was deep.

People often came out from Libby to see the many attractions of the Thomas place. At such times he entertained them by reciting poems from Shakespeare, or he would take them on nature trips around his place, pointing out wild game on or near his place, a deer basking in the sun up on the cliffs, or a blue grouse hiding under the shrubbery. On a Sunday he sometimes invited friends for a big mulligan dinner, made in a huge kettle over an outdoor fire. He was a jovial host—a past master at the art of entertaining.

## *Our Second Son*

IN JULY OUR second son, Ferd, was born. I had moved into town for my confinement, and Mrs. Zimmer again took care of me and the baby.

Harry brought us home one August day. I was glad to be back, and Harry proudly showed me our flourishing garden and orchard as we strolled leisurely around, inspecting the crops. It was surprising how much everything had grown in my absence.

With two babies in the house, and the harvesting in progress, we were busy every minute. We had an early frost, and the cucumbers, squash, and tomatoes had been pretty badly nipped by the middle of August. Later, though, we had a most beautiful Indian summer—the beautiful weather lasting well into November and giving us many opportunities to enjoy the gorgeous artistry of nature. On our boat trips up the river, as Harry poled the boat, stopping here and there to fish in the eddies, we found the banks lined with the red, yellow and gold of autumn, against the dark green of pine and fir, with the bright gold of the tamarack higher up on the mountain slopes. We drifted down into the bril-



liant sunset and clambered up the bank with our two sleepy babies at the end of a perfect day.

Christmastime arrived. We decorated our tree and hung two little stockings by the chimney. A number of our neighbors came for dinner, and in the evening we sang songs. I sang

Hang up the baby's stocking,  
Be sure you don't forget;  
The dear little dimpled darling  
Has never seen Christmas yet.

I tried to get Willy to sing it after me. He sang, "Dimple, dolly-yet," and joined in our hearty laughter. When I sang "Ho, ho, for the Christmas tree," Willy danced up and down, echoing "Ho, ho, ho." What a lovely Christmas it was—the first real Christmas for Willy to remember.

The next spring Harry went to Chicago on business, and my brother Bob stayed with me and the children. Willy was two and a half, Ferd just a year old—and just beginning to toddle from chair to chair. I had been sitting beside the baby, watching him, with some sewing in my lap, when I became aware of the unusual quiet outside where Willy was supposed to be playing in the yard. I got up to look, and there was the yard gate open, and Willy was nowhere in sight. I called to Bob, who was out in the barn, but he had not seen him. The river was still pretty high, and Bob went down the water trail at once, but there were no tracks to indicate he had been there. He said, "You go down the river

to the eddy and look for his hat. If he got in the river it will be floating in the eddy. But I don't think he would fall in—I doused him a couple of times, you know, and he's afraid of the river now."

I walked down along the riverbank in fear and trembling, while Bob went down the road toward the woods. I looked for Willy's little straw hat, as Bob had advised, but could not see it, and I couldn't see his little footprints anywhere. I strained my ears listening for his crying, but all was still. The rushing, angry water was dark and treacherous. Was my baby in there—in the cold black water? No, oh, no; he couldn't be. I could not bear to look. Then I heard a shout—it sounded glad—and I knew that Bob had found him. Here he came with Willy on his shoulder, the little fellow bouncing up and down, gay and happy. His bare feet were scratched and dirty, but his sunburned face was wreathed in smiles. He kept saying, "'Itty bunny, 'itty bunny," and Bob and I decided that he must have seen a wild rabbit and had wandered away trying to catch it.

Bob said that when he found him he was on his way home, marching right along with his little straw hat in his hand. Later, when we went down the road to see how far he had walked, we followed his tracks for nearly a mile. Then, in the dust of the road, we saw where he had turned around and started back. Well—the first thing Bob did was to fix that gate so that Willy could not open it.

When John, our third boy, made his appearance, it was a surprise. Early one March morning I woke

up from a sound sleep to realize that my baby would be born very soon. I called Harry and he made the fires and soon had the house warm. Pains stabbed me cruelly, and I knew that there was no time to get any one from town—I couldn't let Harry leave me. When the baby came, Harry brought me a warm baby blanket, which I wrapped him in. After resting a short while I sat up in bed and washed and dressed him, while Harry was kept busy handing me all the things that I had prepared beforehand.

Having made such a good start, we decided to get along alone. Harry brought me my meals and also took care of the other two boys. Having been a bachelor for many years, he could manage the cooking and housework very well. That was the beginning, and—because I was strong and well—it was not the end of having my babies on the ranch without doctor or nurse. And of course I never took an anesthetic—but I did always rest in bed for nine days, and had very good and loving care.

Once when John was a tiny baby we were digging potatoes and, because it was getting cloudy, we were hurrying to finish before it started raining. I had sent Willy over to the house several times to see if the baby was still asleep—and he was. Then when I had sent him yet another time, here he came bringing the baby out to me. He had his arms around Johnny's neck and the baby's long dress was trailing along the ground. I dropped my hoe and ran to meet him.

"Why didn't you call Mama, Willy?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "he was crying and he wouldn't stop."

Willy was only four then. I patted him on the head. "All right, honey," I said, "but next time you just call me, won't you—you might hurt your little brother, you know."

"Me din't hurt'm did me, Mama?"

"No, not this time, but you might, you know."

But little Willy thought that he had done a good deed, and he would have the last word, so he added, "Me won't might."

When Johnny was about eighteen months old, I was busy picking geese one afternoon in the fall, while he played happily near by. It was too cold for him to play outdoors with the other boys. I had a washtub on the kitchen floor in which I was putting the feathers. Johnny became restless and tried to climb into the tub of feathers—in fact, he seemed determined to get into the tub. I wasn't quite through, so I decided to lift him in and let him play with the feathers for a few minutes, giving me a chance to finish my work. He was having a fine time when, suddenly, there came a knock at the door. I called "Come in!" and two ladies from town stepped inside. Now Johnny was not afraid of our bachelor friends, or of horses or cows, or even wild animals, but he certainly was afraid of those ladies. He took one look and bounded out of the tub and, running through the kitchen and into the living room, he disappeared under the sofa, scattering feathers as he went.

I sat down and visited with the ladies, and we had a cup of tea. Johnny peeked out at us from time to time, but he never said a word. When the ladies had gone, he crept out from under the sofa. I picked the remaining feathers off of him, nursed and changed him, and put him to bed. Then I finished my goose picking—and chased feathers around the house until I had finally gathered them all up.

## *Discoveries in Tub Gulch*

ALTHOUGH WE had a wagon road up the river beyond the ranch by this time, we never tired of walking along the old Indian trail. It wound up and down, following an easy zigzag grade. In the mouth of the gulch, which widened out into a natural camp site, water trickled down into a small pool formed by a sunken tub, or butter firkin, giving the gulch its name—Tub Gulch. There are ancient ax marks on old trees and stumps, and other signs pointing to its early use as a camp or stopping place. No doubt parties of white trappers passed over this trail from the Tobacco Plains country, on their way down to Kootenai Falls and to Bonners Ferry many years earlier. David Thompson and members of the Hudson's Bay Company, and other parties of early explorers are known to have taken this route. Even though they came down the river in boats or canoes, they stopped at convenient places such as this for overnight bivouacs, and possibly for longer visits on extended trapping expeditions.

It is interesting and thrilling to speculate and dream about what manner of men these early travelers may have been. While walking along this trail one day

in search of berries I came upon a whitish object which proved to be a human skull. It was moss-covered and brittle, and was evidently that of a white man. A round, frayed hole in the back of the skull had evidently been made by a bullet. The skull was partly buried in a depression beside a huge boulder, not far from the road and near the mouth of the gulch. Later, men working on the construction of the new highway, now Highway 37, uncovered human bones in their path. All these things are mute testimony of sinister happenings in the dim past that are perhaps unchronicled and are certainly wrapped in mystery.

It was two more boys and several years later. Willy was more than nine now, and Ferd almost eight. There was Johnny, six; Paul, four; and baby Tom. It was a Monday morning—washday—and Harry had crossed the river and gone into town. Before leaving, he had filled the boiler, the washtubs, and everything else available with water from the river. The baby had been bathed and nursed and put to bed for his nap. Willy and Ferd were taking care of Johnny and Paul up on the knoll not far from the house, where they played at going-to-town in their little red wagon, taking turns at being horses or drivers, and running among the apple trees in the orchard. I could hear their shouts and laughter as they played, while I sang "Red Wing" or "Old Black Joe," keeping time to the tune with my hands as they went up and down on the washboard. The

washboard was getting thin and sharp in spots, and we needed a new one. It may be hard to imagine a washboard wearing out, but they do. Tablecloths, napkins—empty them into the boiler to boil; sheets, pillow slips, towels—empty them into the boiler. Little boys' underwear, shirts, overalls—rub, rub, rub! Dirty knees, dirty sleeves—rub, rub, rub. "Pretty Red Wing, the breezes sighing"—rub, rub, rub. "Way down upon de Swanee Ribber"—rub, rub.

"All right, Tommy, just a minute. There you are, all dry now, and fed. Darling baby—sit up in your crib and watch Mama rub, rub, rub, and put the clothes in to boil. What now? Here they come, all four of them. Can you what?"

"Please, Mama, can we have a picnic?"

"Willy, you know Mama is busy."

"Yes, but," asked Ferd, "can't we just have our lunch out in the orchard like a picnic, instead of in the house? We'll carry everything out and bring it all in again—really, Mama."

Willy looked at the big basket of clean clothes. "We'll help you hang up the clothes first."

"Me, too," echoed all the others.

So what could I do? I didn't have the heart to say no. Between us we carried the heavy basket of wet clothes out to the line. "You and Ferd wash your hands, and you can take turns handing me the clothes. And Johnny and Paul can hand me the clothespins. Then we will have our lunch—our picnic—in the orchard."

When the clothesbasket was empty, I put more



clothes to soak and prepared lunch. The boys put the lunch into the little wagon, along with Tommy, and with two boys pulling and two pushing we soon arrived at the picnic site. In a shady spot under a leafy apple tree we spread our lunch and set Tommy down on his blanket. For an hour we enjoyed eating, talking, and laughing in our carefree world, pretending to be miles away in the woods.

Then we went back to the house, I to my washing and the boys to their play. When the washing was all finished, the floor scrubbed and the tubs put away, dinner on the stove, and the boys playing games in the front room, I stole out to the porch to listen. My knuckles were a little sore from the washboard, and I was tired from the day's work; but when I heard the familiar rhythmic strokes of the oars and the answering greeting to my call, everything was right, and I walked happily down to the water's edge to catch the chain as Harry landed the boat.

## *The Snowshoe Donkey*

ONE AFTERNOON, when the children were restless, I took them for a walk up along the river. There were Willy, Ferd, John, and little Paul. Of course our dog Shep came along, too.

It was about the middle of June. Wild roses lined the trail, and wild strawberries were just beginning to ripen. Plump ripe gooseberries hung over the rocks on the mountainside close by the way. We strolled along, picking some of the luscious fruit as we came upon fresh patches by the side of the trail.

We finally reached the Ben Thomas place, where Rainy Creek rushes down through the gulch on its way to the river. Since we had come this far we decided to have a look at the fishpool which surrounded a big boulder near the log cabin, at the edge of the lawn.

Ben came out of his cabin when he heard the children's voices. He was a rugged man of about fifty. His brown eyes lit up with pleasure when he saw the lively youngsters, and he greeted us jovially.

A grouse with her brood of little chicks scurried away and hid under the currant bushes. Shep pricked up his ears and started after them, but I quickly called him back. The boys dashed over to the fish-

pool where several big speckled trout were swimming around in the dark depths of the pool. We were enjoying the brief rest after our long walk when John discovered the donkey, which was grazing down by the river, among the young apple trees at the lower end of the sloping green lawn.

"What's that?" he asked, as he pointed down toward the river.

"A donkey," shouted Willy and Ferd in unison. The commotion woke Shep from his momentary nap beside the pool, and he jumped up and began barking, then started down the slope. All the boys joined me in commanding him to come back.

Ben laughed. "I was wondering," he said, "how long it would be before you boys noticed him. That is little Jack, the Snowshoe donkey."

"Where'd he come from?" "Is he yours?" "How long have you had him?" A chorus of questions arose from the boys.

We sauntered down the green slope with Shep at our heels, and the donkey came to meet us. When we were within a few feet of him the donkey stopped, raised his head, and, bobbing it up and down, gave forth a loud braying sound—the loudest and harshest I had ever heard. It echoed and re-echoed from the hills across the river. The boys all stopped in fright, and little Paul began to cry as he came to me for protection. Shep, with a yelp of dismay, trotted back toward the fishpool with his tail between his legs.

Old Ben assured us that the donkey didn't mean

to frighten us. "It's just his way of greeting you. He does that to me every morning at about four o'clock, right at my window. He wants to let me know that it's time to get up."

When order had been restored the donkey came up and let us all pet him.

"Can we have a ride on him?" "Can we, Mr. Thomas?" "Oh, please, Mr. Thomas, can we, hu?"

"Well, he's an old donkey, boys. He helped to discover the Snowshoe mine a long time ago. Come here and have your ride, and then I'll tell you his story."

The boys were all eager for their ride and the prospect of a story. I lifted little Paul up behind Willy, and they were off. Around and around the lawn they went. Willy wiggled his legs to try to get the donkey to trot, but he went sedately on at a steady walk, with Shep following proudly behind. Then it was Ferd and John's turn, and they laughed and shouted, and slapped their bare feet against the donkey's sides, but he was not inclined to get out of his regular gait. When he had had enough of their playfulness he let out a series of brays that frightened the boys enough that they were willing to get off and let the donkey graze.

Then we gathered around the fishpool, in the shade of a big crab-apple tree. Shep lay on one side, his attention divided between the donkey and the grouse and her brood hiding under the currant bushes—with an occasional look at the storyteller. A tapping of his tail on the ground when I looked his

way was an assurance to me that he was being a good dog. Ben settled himself comfortably against a tree stump, and we were grouped around him as we listened to the story of the Snowshoe donkey.

"Away back a good many years ago, an ambitious prospector found his way over a rough and hazardous trail into this wild and rugged mountain country. He brought along a donkey, heavily loaded with a whole summer's supply of grub—huge slabs of bacon, a sack of flour, and coffee, salt, and beans, lots of beans. And he had a few cooking things—coffeepot, frying pan, and a bean kettle, tin plates, a cup or two, some spoons and forks and a big, sharp butcher knife. And there was an assortment of mining tools, and a good-sized bedroll. The poor donkey staggered along under this heavy load at the heels of his master. When they came to a likely-looking outcropping of rock they stopped and camped long enough to test the samples, perhaps staying a day or two, then going on over zigzag rocky trails to another lead.

"The donkey didn't mind this life during the brief summers, when he could browse on the lush huckleberry brush and an occasional patch of bunch grass while his master labored in the diggings, or, for a change, cast his line into the sparkling mountain streams to catch a mess of fish for his supper. But winter came early in the mountains. When the snow lay thick in the trail, and fog enveloped the landscape, the donkey's master could no longer carry on his prospecting. Before he could start out on

his long trip to the little settlement that eventually became Libby he would fashion a pair of snowshoes out of willows and deer-hide thongs.

"It was November, and the snow was piling up thick and fast. The prospector had no shelter for himself or his donkey except a lean-to of poles against the side of a fallen tree. It was time to start for the settlement. He loaded all his belongings onto the faithful donkey and, strapping on his new snowshoes, started down the trail.

"It was a slow and hazardous trip. He had to stop at night, get a fire started in the wet forest to cook supper and dry out the wet bedding, find a sheltered place for the night; then be up at dawn and off again after a hasty breakfast. After three days of difficult traveling, they finally came in sight of the little cluster of log cabins, with friendly smoke rising from stone chimneys.

"Here the prospector found friends, and the donkey was turned loose for the winter. There was no hay and no warm stable, but he managed to find a warm enough bed on the dry chips in someone's woodshed, and he learned how to get handouts at mealtime. He would come up to the back door of the log cabin where his master was putting in the winter with two other prospectors and sound off with lusty brays until they handed out the leftover pancakes and bacon rinds. If they didn't give him enough, he would go on to the next cabin and put on another show until he had enough to eat. At noon and again at dinnertime he repeated the

performance until he had his fill of biscuits, potato peelings and the like. This routine continued until the green grass appeared among the stumps, and green leaves unfurled on the bushes and trees. Then it was good to bask in the warm spring sunshine with plenty to eat all around him.

"Higher up in the mountains the snow still lay deep and cold. But warm rains and spring sunshine prevailed, and the snow disappeared from the foothills and was pushed farther back until only the higher peaks were white in the distance. Then one day in May our prospector decided that he had been idle long enough. Some of the placer miners had already gone up Libby Creek to their sluice boxes. The far-off mountains beckoned to him, and he caught up little Jack, loaded him up with grub from the general store, and, packing his equipment on top of the load, set out on the trail one fine clear morning.

"There followed a summer of prospecting, huckleberry picking, fishing, and an occasional hunt for a deer or mountain goat for food, while the donkey browsed, drowsed, and brayed. Then back again on snowshoes to the warmth and hospitality of the miners' camp.

"During the summer of 1889 the prospector found a rich strike. Huge boulders were strewn about, bearing good quantities of lead, silver, and gold. He built a cabin near by and prepared to develop the mine. When it turned out to be all that he had hoped for, he named it the Snowshoe Mine. Then a road was built from Libby out to the mine, and

there was no further need for the faithful donkey, and he was turned loose in town. By this time Libby boasted of lawns and flower gardens, and little Jack became quite a nuisance. Children rode on his back, and he piled them off when he got tired of them. Finally the townspeople got tired of his early-morning serenading and his stealthy nibbling at their flower beds, so a while back someone brought him out here to me."

As he finished his story, Old Ben stretched his legs and shook the ashes out of his pipe, which had gone out long before. He got up and refilled his pipe. The sun had gone down behind a bank of clouds in the west. We thanked Ben for his story. Ferd wanted to know if it was really true. Ben said yes, it was true to the best of his knowledge.

The trip back home was not so lighthearted. Ferd stubbed his toe on a rock, and when he saw the little spot of blood from the bruise he set up a dismal howl. Shep chased a chipmunk until it hid under the bark of a log. Willy tried to help Shep find the chipmunk and tore a little gash in his finger. More blood—but Willy wanted to show me what a big boy he was; he didn't cry—he wasn't going to be a crybaby like Ferd. When Ferd saw that Willy's wound was bleeding just as much as his, but he wasn't crying, he stopped crying, and they were soon both laughing at the antics of Shep who was chasing a big yellow-and-black butterfly. Little Paul lagged behind and began to complain of being tired, so Willy





*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

EAST SIDE OF LIBBY IN 1901

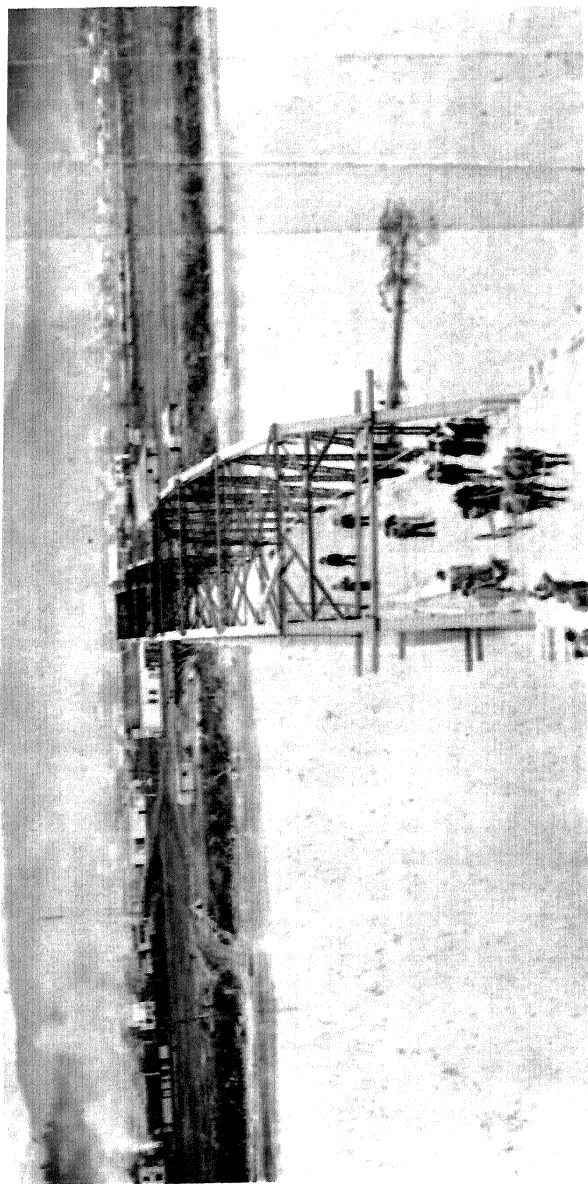
PLATE II



*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

MINERAL AVENUE, LIBBY, MONTANA, IN 1910  
Looking toward the Kootenai River

PLATE III



*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

THE FIRST BRIDGE OVER THE KOOTENAI RIVER AT LIBBY, MONTANA, 1910

Mrs. J. M. Kennedy, in the buggy, was the first woman to cross the new bridge

PLATE IV



EARLY-DAY LOGGING

PLATE V

*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*



*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

# HAULING ORE FROM THE MINES WITH A FOUR-MULE TEAM

John Smith and Martin Davidson

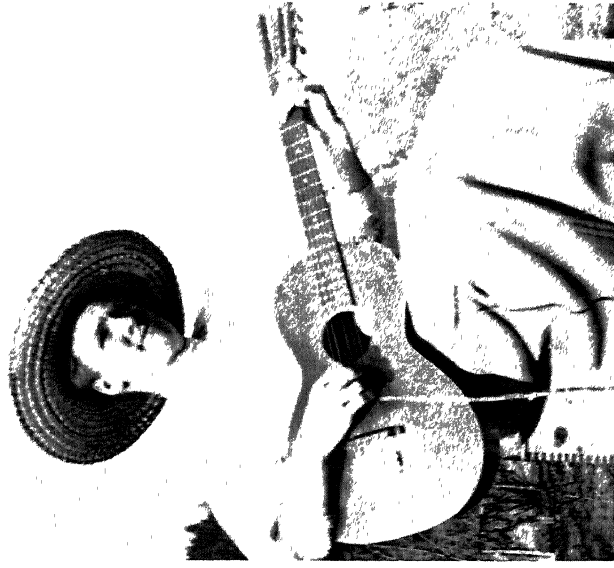
PLATE VI



*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

# A TYPICAL CAMP SCENE IN THE FOREST

PLATE VII



THE AUTHOR, IN HER YOUNGER DAYS, WITH HER  
GUITAR.

PLATE VIII



THE AUTHOR WITH HER DAUGHTER ALICE

PLATE IX



GOING UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO PICK HUCKLEBERRIES

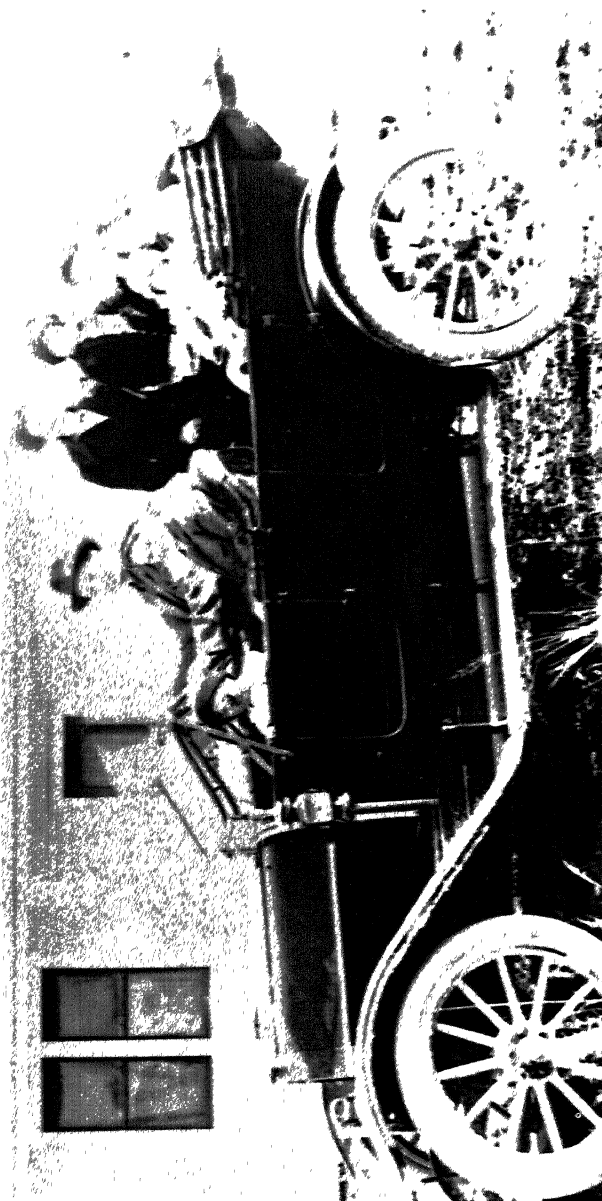
PLATE X



*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*

A TYPICAL MINER'S CABIN

PLATE XI



ONE OF LIBBY'S FIRST AUTOMOBILES

Bill Kemp is the driver

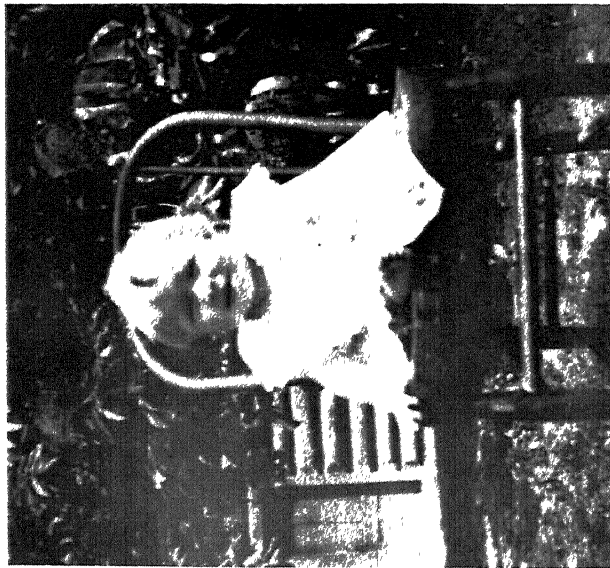
PLATE XII

*Courtesy Libby Pioneer Society*





BILL AND FERD BOOTHMAN WHEN THEY WERE SMALL



ALICE BOOTHMAN BY THE ELDERBERRY BUSH AT  
THE SIDE DOOR OF THE NEW ADDITION TO THE  
OLD CABIN.

PLATE XIV

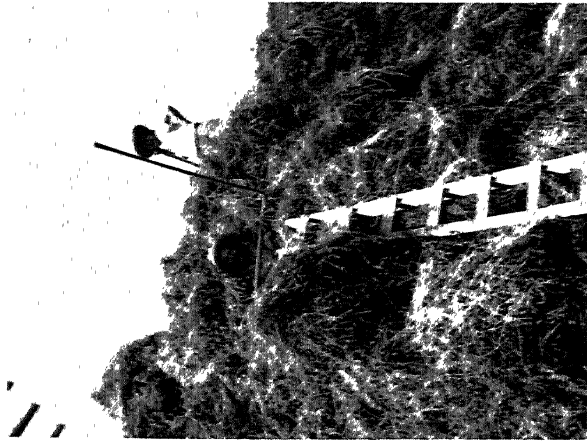


DAISY, OUR PET FAWN

PLATE XV



ALICE AND HER COUSIN, CORNELIA BAKKER, ON THE BANKS  
OF THE KOOTENAI RIVER.



MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES

PLATE XVII



*Photo by Evelyn Boothman*

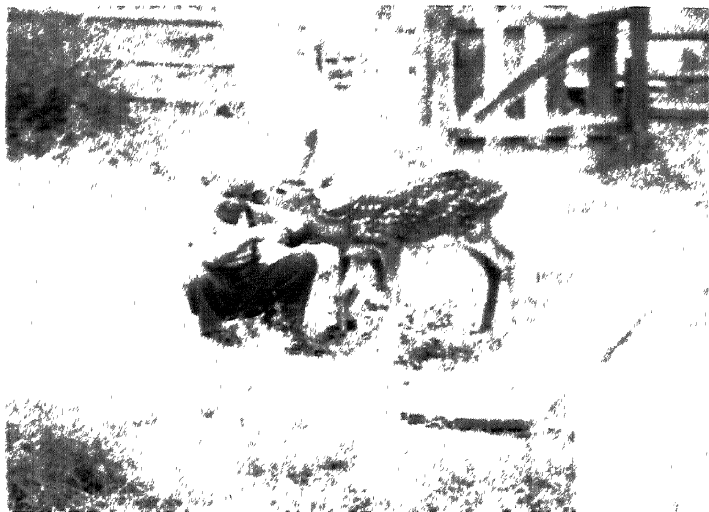
APPLE TREES IN THE LATTE ORCHARD IN FULL BLOOM

PLATE XVIII



AN ELK HUNT IN THE SPOTTED BEAR COUNTRY

*From left to right:* Paul Boothman, Clarence Davidson, Hank Smith, John Boothman, Fuzzy Friend, Ferd Boothman, Tom Boothman, Bud Boyle, Henry Crippen, and Martin Davidson. Herb Warner in foreground.



*Photo by Clara Boothman*

GRANDCHILDREN FEEDING A FAWN

PLATE XX



*Photo by Clara Boothman*

DEER DRIVEN DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS BY THE SNOW

PLATE XXI



A "LADIES' AID" MEETING AT THE NEW HOUSE IN LATER YEARS

PLATE XXII



THE "NEW" HOUSE, BOOTHMAN HOMESTEAD NEAR LIBBY,  
MONTANA

PLATE XXIII



gave him a piggyback ride, jouncing him around until he laughed with glee.

When we got home the boys related our adventures to their daddy with much excitement. Little Jack, the Snowshoe donkey, had made a big hit with the boys, and they went back on frequent trips to see him that summer. If it became strangely quiet about the place, I would worry and fret for fear the children had gotten into the river, or were lost on the mountainside, but I soon learned to wait patiently until evening, when they would come trailing home with bruised toes and torn clothes from up the river. Then I would listen to their story—how they just happened to be taking a walk and got to the Ben Thomas place, and stayed to see if he wouldn't just happen to let them ride little Jack for a while.

Then one day Ben's nephew, who had been staying with him, came to our place leading little Jack by a rope—a gift from Ben Thomas to the boys. You never saw such happy children. But to this day I don't know whether Ben Thomas did this to please the boys or more to annoy me. The first thing that had to be done was to build a fence around my flower beds. And until that was done little Jack had to be kept tied up. There were long faces then, but soon the fence was under construction and soon it was safe to turn the donkey loose.

The boys vied with each other to feed little Jack, and to curry him and provide straw for his bed. At first they were content to take rides around the yard and up and down the trail near the house. Then

they had visions of gold "in them thar hills," behind the house. So they would load the donkey and go on a prospecting trip—taking a big lunch and whatever tools they could find with which to dig for gold—and a couple of old blankets, too, in case they found so much gold that they couldn't get back home that night.

Shep always went along on those trips, trotting proudly, tail wagging, mouth open, and tongue dripping. But when the shades of night deepened and the owls began to screech, and the coyote's wail re-echoed from the cliffs, the prospectors would return home, tired out but still full of enthusiasm. A sack of rocks of various colors and sizes would be lashed to the donkey's back, and the boys would take turns at the lead rope. Then would follow a heated account of their adventures. And Daddy had to inspect the rocks to see if there wasn't at least a little gold in all that pile.

Little Jack would always let us know when the first faint glow of each new day began to light up the eastern sky. He would get as close as possible to the house and start his braying—driving all thought of sleep from our minds. He was a good alarm clock—the only trouble being that we didn't want to get up at such an early hour.

The boys sometimes took their homemade bows and arrows and went on hunting expeditions up the old Indian trail along the river. They would take turns riding the donkey, and Shep would run ahead. They had visions of bringing back a load of venison,

but they usually returned with more rocks. But they always had fun and big adventure.

The following winter was a long and severe one. Snow was piled high all around, and deep trails led to the barn and the woodshed, and to the water hole cut through two feet or more of ice on the river. The boys took turns leading little Jack down the riverbank and dipping a pail of water from the deep hole and hauling it up so that he could drink. Little icicles formed around his chin as the water dripped from his mouth. Frost glistened on his rough coat as he shook himself, and he trembled a little as he dug sharp little hoofs into the slippery snow-covered trail climbing up the riverbank. He always seemed glad to get back to his warm little corner in the barn, with plenty of hay to eat and an occasional handout of leftover goodies from the table, or a handful of grain purloined from the poultry feed. The donkey did not fatten up, however, and he sometimes even forgot to bray at his accustomed time in the morning. The years were beginning to tell—he was an old, old donkey.

At last the snow melted and the ice was pushed down the river by rising waters formed by the melting snow. Grass appeared in the bare places, and leaves burst out on the bushes and trees. Little Jack nibbled on the tender young fodder, and he regained some of his usual high spirits. He resumed his habit of braying before the first robin began to chirp in the apple trees.

Then one morning in April he was nowhere to be seen. We looked everywhere for him—up on the mountainside, along the river, down the road toward town, and up along the Indian trail. It was no use—little Jack was gone. There followed a period of mourning. I still thought he might be in some secluded place not far away, enjoying the spring grass and tender leaves. But at other times I feared he might have stumbled into the river. We missed him very much. I even awoke at four o'clock in the morning and listened for the familiar bray, but all was quiet—there was only the muted twitter of the birds.

Then one day several weeks later, a man came to see us and told us that an old gray donkey lay dead in the cemetery west of town, and people had wondered where he had come from. This man had heard that we had a donkey, and came up to see whether we still had him or whether this donkey they had found could be ours.

The boys crowded around to hear the man's report. Willy thought it must be little Jack that they had found, saying sadly and thoughtfully, "Well, Jack always knew what was best for him—so if he is dead I bet he is in the cemetery."

Investigation proved that the donkey that had died in the cemetery really was little Jack—our Snowshoe donkey. How he ever managed to get there—traveling the three miles to town and then crossing the river, either on the ferryboat or by swimming the icy stream—remains a mystery to this day.

## *The Circus*

OUR FIRST CIRCUS was a memorable event. The children were so excited that we could hardly get them to eat their breakfast. To have them all dressed for the trip was no small task, but, as usual, they helped each other to get ready. Soon Harry was at the door with the team and, with a stern command to Carlo, our new dog, to stay home, we were off.

When we were within a mile of town we could hear music, then horns tooting, lions roaring, shouts and yells. The ferryboat was there at the landing. Thank goodness, for once we didn't have to wait for it. Harry drove to a shady spot under some pine trees, unhitched the horses, and tied them to the back of the buggy, where they could eat the hay that he had brought for them. We could see the billowing big gray top of the circus tent, over to the west across the river. The older boys wanted to run pell-mell down to the ferryboat, but I told them to wait for the younger ones. So Willy took Paul's hand, and Ferd and John walked sedately side by side—all four of them orderly, only their eager faces and bright eyes showing their inner excitement.

When we had crossed the river and were walk-

ing up the opposite bank we could hear the calliope several blocks away. Its weird music filled the air and set the boys to marching. It came closer and closer, until finally there it was, right in front of us, followed by a number of fine, dappled-gray horses ridden by elegant ladies in black velvet costumes trimmed with gold and silver braid. The ladies smiled to right and left, flicking their slender whips daintily, their stovepipe hats nodding up and down with the rhythm of the horses' prancing. Then came two camels ridden by Arabs in baggy trousers, silk blouses, and red turbans. A little black boy led the llama, and a tall black man led a bear. Next came a big red-and-gilt wagon drawn by four big horses with glittering harness. This wagon carried the brass band, the musicians wearing blue uniforms trimmed in gold braid and stovepipe hats with golden plumes. Little Paul, who was riding on Harry's shoulder, clapped his hands with glee. Even baby Tom was enjoying the fun and excitement as I held him up to see.

Along came a wagon with three bears, another with a lion—others with hyenas, tigers, and leopards. Then came the Shetland ponies, which delighted the children, and then the clowns. The "band of elephants" turned out to be one tired old fellow. The bridge across Flower Creek, over which the rest of the parade had passed, crashed down under the weight of this huge beast. But he did not seem to mind—he plodded right on through splintered wood and mud.

It seemed that this first circus to come to Libby

was a bigger event than all the rest of the holidays—Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Christmas—rolled into one. The streets were lined with people. There was no doubt about it, everybody was there. I had no idea there were so many people in the whole community.

We sauntered over to the big top. The children had never seen anything like this before. They were in a new and different world. There were so many things to see, so many things being sold, and so many things that the children wanted. It was getting hot, and it was very dusty. Harry bought pink lemonade for all of us, and he got the boys each a bag of peanuts and let them each choose a toy. Willy and Ferd each wanted a whip. Johnny asked for a monkey on a stick, and Paul said "Me, too," so he got the same. Then Willy said, "Aren't you going to get something for Tommy? Look, he wants a monkey too." But Tommy was at that age when he put everything into his mouth, so a monkey would not do. We found a rubber ball on a string for him, which he was content to chew.

In the side show the children liked the Punch and Judy best. They didn't care so much for the fat lady or the midgets, or the fellow who threw knives at the pretty lady. But they were fascinated by the lady "that let snakes walk all over her."

We went into the main entrance, and strolled around, looking at the wild animals in their cages. The boys put peanuts through the bars for the monkeys. Harry was carrying little Paul, and Tommy

was riding on my hip. We were getting tired and very warm, so we were glad to climb up to our seats and watch the antics of the clowns. Then the horses came out, with their brilliant riders, and the ringmaster cracking his whip, and after that the trapeze artists and the roaring lions—and more lemonade for the children, with the crunching of ice when they reached the bottoms of their glasses. And the balloons—after all, it wouldn't be a circus without balloons—red, blue, yellow, and green.

A tired and dusty family, we trudged to the ferry landing and rode across the river. The boys scuffed along—their copper-toed shoes dusty, and their white starched shirts limp and dirty—happily discussing all the wonderful things they had seen. And they laughed once more about the elephant crashing through the bridge. The four little boys cuddled down in the back of the buggy in the hay that the horses had left, as we jogged along home through the woods in the cool of the evening. Carlo greeted us wildly, and the cow was by the gate ready to be let into the barn.



## *Our Neighbors*

JACK KEARNEY was one of our early-day characters. There are the remains of log cabins all over this area that were once occupied by him. One is located on Rainy Creek, one up Kearney Gulch, several along the Kootenai, and others are in the Fisher River country. Wherever a prospect looked promising, there he built a cabin. He had lived for several years in a cabin about three miles up the river from us.

One day Willy and Ferd and I, while hunting for our cow which had strayed away, stopped at his place. As we approached his cabin we could hear voices in animated conversation. Ferd was about to knock on the door to inquire about the cow but I held them back as Old Jack was having an argument with someone. We could hear the two voices, and one was using anything but choice language. He called the other vile names, and their voices rose in angry discord. I was about to go and leave the two to their bickering, when the door opened suddenly and Jack stepped out. Seeing us, he spoke in his usual friendly way, and asked us to come in. "I just made some coffee, ma'am," he said. "You'd better have a cup."

We stepped in and looked around curiously for the companion with whom he had been arguing. But there was no one there. I inquired about the cow, but he had not seen it. I declined the coffee on the plea that we had to be on our way, but it was actually because the stuff looked pretty muddy. He had the reputation of making his coffee by adding a little more water and a little more coffee to the grounds each day, and of repeating this procedure until the pot was so full of grounds it would hold no more.

The cabin was very small, like all of his cabins, and contained only a bed, a tiny cookstove, a small table, a block of wood for a chair, a bench for a water bucket, and a rusty tin washbasin. A frying pan or two and a black-bottomed saucepan hung on nails behind the stove. The bed was covered with a black bearhide—and there was the little tunnel where Jack evidently crawled in at night and out again in the morning.

In the fall, as soon as the first snow covered the ground, it meant that we all joined in making a huge snowman. We had one such snowman that lasted from November until March. Sometimes we had to patch him up a little—put the pipe back into his mouth or the hat back on his head—but there he was, charcoal eyes, carrot nose, and all. To toughen him up during warm spells we would throw a pail or two of water over him in the evening, and the next morning he would be a statue of sparkling

ice. But sometime in March he would droop, and drip, and gradually shrink away. Poor fellow, we missed him—our jolly old snowman.

All through the years, Harry made, or helped make, fresh crops of bows and arrows, while I helped with feather headdresses so that our little warriors could have their sham battles. Then we would have an epidemic of ski making, when everybody had to have skis—or it might be sleds, or slingshots. And last but not least, when the sap was lush in the limbs, there were those shrill clear whistles, made from lengths of willow.

Winter was a busy time. The days were all too short—what with a little learning, a little play, and a lot of living.

Christmastime always started with the ceremony of hauling in the yule log a few days before Christmas. In our family this log was as big as the fireplace would hold. It was used as a backlog. All the boys had to have a hand at pulling and tugging until, with a mighty heave, it was rolled onto the hearth on Christmas Eve, to smoulder all through the night.

For weeks before Christmas we would take scouting trips into the woods to locate a suitable tree. When we had located one, we just remembered where it was until a day or two before Christmas. Then on the chosen day I would put a big meat pie into the oven—having earlier baked an ovenful of apple pies—and we would go after the big tree. The whole family joined in pushing and pulling the big hand

sled, provided with blankets to accommodate those too small to walk, and finally we arrived at the site. With much chopping, and heaving and tugging, the tree was finally cut down and loaded onto the sled. With the blankets and babies piled into the middle, among the branches, we made our homeward trip, amid much singing of "Ho, ho, for the Christmas tree; ho, ho, for the Christmas tree," and laughing and shouting until we reached home—just in time to take out of the oven the meat pie, with a crust as golden as the sunset and a delicious aroma all its own. This routine was followed so regularly for so many years that it became a tradition with us. To set the table was only a few minutes' work, and then we would gather eagerly around, eyes sparkling in anticipation of the good food and all the good times approaching. We had our tree—Christmas festivities had begun.

A big Christmas package arrived from England. We looked at it longingly, speculated about it, and shook it—but it was not to be opened until Christmas morning. For weeks I had been busy in the evenings, after the children were tucked in bed, making fantastic stuffed animals and mosquito-bar bags for the Christmas candy. And there were mince pies and many different kinds of cookies, and the older boys made popcorn and cranberry chains for the tree.

Finally, the great day arrived. " 'T was the day before Christmas,"—the tree was up in the middle of the living room. We had all helped to festoon the chains 'round and 'round, in graceful loops; the

bright candles were spaced just so. We hurried the formality of hanging up the stockings—one tiny one for the baby—as we all sang

Hang up the baby's stocking,  
Be sure you don't forget;  
The dear little dimpled darling  
Has never seen Christmas yet.

Then Harry read a Christmas story, and we all went obediently to bed. For a time there was whispering and giggling upstairs, then all was still—"Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

Before dawn I heard patter, patter, patter. What was that? I thought so—a small boy coming downstairs to see if Santa had arrived, followed by another and another. There were oh's and ah's as little spying eyes discovered the toys spread under the tree. "He's been here! He's been here!" they exclaimed in unison.

Harry and I got up and started the fires and lit the candles on the tree, and there were exclamations of delight as the toys were brought out, one by one, from beneath the thick branches. There was a big gray stuffed elephant for Willy, a brown monkey with red cap and tinkling bell for Ferd, a horse for John, a gray kitten for Paul, and a rag boy doll for the baby. Red cloth reins with bells were something they always got for Christmas—a new set each year. And there were the mosquito-bar bags of candy and nuts and a big orange—one for each. In the stockings that "were hung by the chimney with

care" they found trumpets, candy canes, chocolate men, and rubber balls. Then the packages from relatives and friends in Missoula, and the package from Harry's people in England were opened, and more wonders came to light—a football, a flashlight, a drum, mittens, mufflers, caps, games and books. Before we blew out the candles we joined once more in singing, as we danced around the Christmas tree, "Ho, ho, for the Christmas tree."

Several of our nearest neighbors came to share our big dinner later in the day. In the evening, after the chores were done and the house was somewhat straightened up, and the cold winter night was shut out, we lit the candles on the tree again, and the children and I marched around the sparkling tree for the last time, singing carols and "Ho, ho, for the Christmas tree," while Harry and his interested guests looked on.

Of course we had many more such Christmases through the years, each year or two another baby being welcomed into the family circle. I remember especially the Christmas when Tommy was five years old, and there were drums and whistles galore. Tom Fleetwood presented each of the boys with a mouth organ. Five mouth organs—that was too much! Even though I did maintain that they were young only once, and were entitled to a good time, five boys playing five mouth organs were quite a trial.

*Tramps*

DURING THE EARLIEST days we saw no tramps, but by the time we had lived on the ranch about ten years they began to appear. Still, they were not really tramps, just men down on their luck who usually paid their way by doing odd jobs as they traveled from town to town. One such fellow—middle-aged, his clothing tattered but clean-looking, offered to split wood for a meal. He split wood while I prepared a lunch for him. Then I called him in and showed him the washbasin on the bench where he could wash up. He ate heartily, and when he had finished his lunch, topped off with apple pie, he went out and split more wood. When the pile of wood was all split he asked one of the boys to get him some writing paper. He took from his pocket the stub of a pencil, and while he rested he drew pictures for them—beautiful pictures of the river, the mountains, the cow in the barnyard, the chickens scratching in the chicken yard, and even of the boys themselves. We were all fascinated—the man was quite an artist.

When Harry came home and asked his name, he answered, "Call me Sam." Supper was now ready,

and Harry asked "Call-me-Sam," as the children had interpreted his name, to stay and eat with us under the elderberry bush. He sketched us there as we ate, and Harry asked him to stay for the night, and during the evening he told us his story.

He had not been financially successful at anything he undertook, and he was ashamed to accept further help from his folks back home. He had always liked drawing and painting, but had not considered himself good enough to make a living at it. When his wife died he had decided to move away and get a new start. He was on his way to Spokane, and from there he hoped to go on to California where he had an uncle who had always believed in him. So Call-me-Sam stayed with us overnight, and the next day he thanked us for our kindness to him and continued on his way west—paying his way as he went—not a tramp but a man temporarily down on his luck.

The next time a hungry fellow stopped in, his passport was a violin from which he drew the most lovely music. He offered to split wood or do any other chores, but we needed nothing at the time and felt well repaid for the handout we gave him when he played for us as he sat on the porch, his foot tapping time to the music. He was "aimin' to go to Kalispell," he said, "to help his brother-in-law during harvesting."

I'll never forget our "prize tramp." He was not only hungry and ragged and dirty, but he was also a bit off balance, a human derelict. He was of medium



height, with a ruddy complexion and a grizzled full beard, filthy with tobacco stain and traces of egg and oatmeal. Besides being repulsive to look at, he talked like a crazy man. He said that many years earlier he had found a rich gold mine up near Jennings, that he had brought out a burro packload of almost pure gold, that there was no railroad at that time and he had loaded his gold onto a steamboat at Jennings and they had taken him to Fort Steel; that after paying for the trip with gold he had become rich from the sale of his rich ore, and had traveled all over the country. When Harry asked him why he had not come back and developed his property, he answered, "I was havin' me a good time, young man, havin' me a good time. I know'd that when that was gone, I could go right back there and find plenty more."

"And haven't you been back since?" asked Harry.

"Oh yes, yes, I been back many a time, but I couldn't jest find the exact place. But I'll find it this time! Yes, sir, come spring, I'll find it!"

"But," said Harry, "you can't find it with the ground covered with snow."

"Hu? No, I guess not, but I'm goin' up to Jennings, and I'll be there when spring opens up. There's agoin' to be a big gold rush up there in the spring, and I wanta be there before the rush begins."

We didn't know what to do with him—he was so dirty and we did not want the children to be around him—but we fed him, and Harry found

some old blankets and made a bed for him in the hay shed.

The next morning there were several strands of hay added to the assortment in his bushy beard. We had already had our breakfast when he appeared—I was glad of that! I gave him coffee and fried eggs and potatoes and toast. Then Harry hitched up the team and took him into town, gave him a couple of dollars and bought him a ticket to Jennings and saw that he got onto the train. That was the last we saw of him.

When Paul was a baby we had an interesting experience with a tramp. Snow covered the ground; trees and bushes, stumps and fence posts were all decked in white caps. It was cold—below the zero mark—and frost particles glittered in the trail of light from our window in the early evening. This man appeared out of the shadows, having walked across the river on the ice from the railroad track, no doubt attracted by our light in the window and the smoke from our chimney. There is nothing more friendly than smoke from a chimney and the light in the window of a log cabin at the end of a winter day, and it has drawn many a wayfarer to our fire-side. Carlo gave a warning bark, and we knew that someone was approaching. Harry stepped out onto the porch just as a man came stumbling up the trail from the river.

“Hello, there,” said Harry.

“Howdy, mister. Could you maybe put a feller up fer the night?”

"Come on in," said Harry, "and we'll see."

Harry led in an old man with about an inch of stubble on his face. Little icicles clung around his mouth, an old wool cap muffled his ears, and the black overcoat which hung nearly to his feet was pretty ragged. Over his shoulder he carried a bulging gunny sack.

He was shivering with cold as he shuffled over to the hearth and dropped the sack filled with cooking utensils and the like to the floor. "I think I froze m' feet," he said, as he sat down in the chair that Harry pulled up for him. "No, they're not froze now," he added, as Harry looked apprehensively at his bundled-up feet, "but they're mighty sore." He proceeded to unwind lengths of clothesline that held the gunny sacks in which his feet were wrapped. Harry took the ice-encrusted sacks and put them out on the porch as the old man pulled them off to reveal overshoes that were two or three sizes too big for the poor crippled feet.

"Just call me Ben," he answered, when Harry asked his name.

"Ben," came the echo from around the table as the boys caught the name. Harry was still busy divesting the old man of his wraps—his woolen cap and his long overcoat.

Ben looked at the circle of boys and grinned as he said, "Yes sir, just call me old Ben." Then, after he had warmed up, we found out that he had not eaten supper, so I heated up the soup and fried some venison and potatoes for him. While he ate, Harry

went out to the office and made a fire in the old Sively stove, and then he went with the old fellow when he walked painfully to his welcome bed. Harry took a basin of warm water and soap over and bathed the old man's sore feet, which were in bad shape from frostbite. He gave him a pair of clean socks and dry shoes to wear indoors.

The next day Ben told us how he and a partner had wandered into Libby, broke, and had tried to get work, to no avail. They had then stayed in the jungle by the warmth of a bonfire, eating whenever people were generous enough to give them a little food, until the weather became so severe that they nearly froze to death. His feet had been frost-bitten one night when the fire went out while he slept. His partner, he said, had crept into a railroad boxcar one day and headed back for Spokane, but he had decided to try his luck in the other direction. He thought he might make it to Whitefish, but he missed the freight train going east and had started to walk the track. "When I see your light," he said, "and the smoke acomin' out of the chimney, I says to m'self, 'That looks like home.' I thinks maybe a friendly bachelor lives there, and I can maybe help him around the place—so here I be—mistaken some about that bachelor business though"—and he grinned at the family circle.

We learned to like old Ben, and we kept him the rest of the winter. He was a great help with the children. Baby Paul went to him to be rocked to sleep—he would rather go to old Ben than to almost

any one else. When one of the children fell and bumped himself, Ben would say, "Well, well, come here, and I'll pick you up."

When Johnny bumped his head on the table, he gave the table a thump and said, "Bad old table to bump little Johnny's head," and soon Johnny was laughing about it.

When his feet were healed and he could get around, he made himself very useful. He helped Harry to cut and haul wood, feed the stock, and do many other chores. The latter part of the winter was very mild, and the two men cleared several acres of land and seeded it down to oats. On warm days he would sometimes take all the children up onto the bench back of the house, across the road, and when they came to a big boulder there he said that every time the rooster crowed that big rock turned over—but the rooster never crowed while they were looking. He made whistles for them from red maple branches when the sap began to rise, and led them up along the riverbank to look for pretty rocks. They listened to the stories he told of monkeys in the jungle and fairies in the grass. When an owl hooted, it was a sign that spring was here to stay; and when the coyotes howled, it was a warning that a storm was on the way—and the man in the moon was looking down to see if all the little boys and girls in the world were being good.

But as the winter snows melted, the wanderlust got the best of the old fellow, and I put some groceries in his packsack with the frying pan, coffee-

pot, and stew kettle, and Harry gave him a few dollars and set him across the river to continue his journey along the railroad track toward Whitefish, where he hoped to find work. For years the children talked about all the things Ben did, and they never forgot Ben's rock that turned over every time the rooster crowed.

## *A Mountain Lion*

THE CHILDREN's education was another thing that required our attention. Before Willy was four he knew all the letters of the alphabet by sight. He had learned them by asking questions. He would ask what the letters were on the milk can, or on the oven door, or on spice cans, and finally in the newspapers. Then he learned that letters grouped together made words. He thought that putting letters into words was very clever, and he considered it a great game, and he was soon putting words together to form sentences. He and Ferd had little contests to see who could make the most words out of letters, and the most sentences out of words.

Mr. Head, who was the county school superintendent at the time, supplied us with schoolbooks, and we soon had a school system of our own, with more or less regular hours for study. Harry was the teacher, and it was my chore to keep the younger children occupied and quiet while lessons were in progress. School, the way we handled it, was just another game to the boys.

When lesson time was over, they put on mittens, caps, and overshoes, and plunged into the snow to

make snow forts or have sham battles. Or they would take their bows and arrows and go prowling around looking for Indians. In the evenings there was always a story read aloud, at which Harry and I would take turns, and it was not long until Willy and Ferd, and then John, and so on down the line, took his turn at reading aloud, sometimes only a page, then more, each according to his ability, until the boys' bedtime, when Harry and I would go back to our own favorite books, or perhaps to a game of cribbage.

It was a warm day in August. Harry had finished cradling the patch of wheat below the orchard. It was a piece of stump land just recently cleared. There had been a good stand of wheat, and now the chickens went down there every day to feed on the scattered grains. We had noticed a disturbance among the chickens occasionally, and we were on the lookout to see what was frightening them. This afternoon Harry had been especially watchful. He saw something move among the stumps, and the chickens, busily picking up scattered wheat and chasing grasshoppers, seemed wary and ill at ease. So Harry came to the house and got the rifle and climbed to the hayloft to get a better view. At first he could see nothing unusual—the chickens were continuing to feed. Then he saw a slim long body move swiftly from one stump to another, slinking along stealthily toward the chickens feeding on the near side of the field—like a cat stalking a mouse or an unsus-



pecting bird. After a brief stop behind a stump, the animal would come out and move swiftly to another one. Then Harry got a good look at him—a mountain lion! He raised his gun and was ready when the huge animal came out from behind the next stump. A blast from the rifle and the beast jumped about four feet into the air, turned, and went streaking off into the brush. There was a bloodstain on the ground where he had been wounded and Harry tried to follow him, but the underbrush was so dense that he could not follow the tracks. The animal probably died from the wound. At least the chickens were not molested again, and that was the last we saw of the mountain lion.

One day the boys brought a wounded flicker to the house. He was just a baby, and he cried shrilly and pitifully to be free, but he had a broken wing and could not fly. Ferd held him very carefully and begged to be allowed to keep him. Well, I put a splint on the poor little bird's buff-and-orange wing, tied it up, and allowed the boys to look after him. We named him Dickey and he became a great pet. The children watched over him and brought grasshoppers, cutworms, and crickets to his box. One day, eagerly calling, "Tweet, tweet," he hopped out of his box and came to meet one of the boys as he approached with a choice morsel, and after gulping it down he looked about for more.

We taught Carlo and the barnyard cats to leave Dickey alone. If one so much as looked at the poor

little bird he was soon discouraged with warnings and threats. Finally Dickey went along when we weeded the garden, and when any of us found a worm or a choice bug we called him and he came hopping along, answering "Tweet, tweet," and then settling down to wait for the next invitation.

At night his favorite perch was the rail on the bottom of the sewing machine. All summer, Dickey was with us, and the boys never grew tired of taking care of him. Then one Saturday night the children had all had their baths, as usual, in a washtub on the kitchen floor. For some reason the tub had not been emptied that night, and the next morning there was Dickey in the tub, drowned. Whether he had tried to take a bath, like the rest of the family—or perhaps had just attempted to get a drink of water—we never knew. That day there was a funeral—a very sad one, too. We never forgot our little pet bird, Dickey.

Another pet that we had through the years was a pine squirrel. He also came to us as a baby—Carlo caught him under a log. When John picked him up he thought he was dead, but he was only "scared to death," and he soon revived. It was not long until he was one of the family—in fact, he seemed to think he was the boss. He scolded the dog, the cats, and each of us in turn. He would sit on our shoulders and demand to be fed at the table, or he would jump down and help himself from our plates. What he could not eat he would carry off to one of his hide-outs in some most unexpected place. He was so

full of curiosity that he would pry into any box or unopened bag, and he would leave little caches of food all around the place. He loved bread and bits of meat and cookies.

One day when we had all gone to town he had an especially busy time. Returning home, we found a big hole in the cupboard door and a pile of chips. He had chewed his way into the cupboard and had spilled oatmeal, beans, sugar, and crackers all over the shelves. Then he chattered at me as if to challenge my right to clean up the mess he had made. The children still loved him, and the baby would pat him and call him "Piddely." He was a cuddly little pet, especially when he was sleepy. He would roll up into a ball in their laps, or in their coat pockets, and go to sleep. But he had too many bad habits, and we decided we must get rid of him. So one day, when the pine nuts were ripe, we took him part way to town and turned him loose by the roadside where other squirrels could be seen, and not far from the spot where Carlo had found him under the log. Perhaps he was reunited with his family. At any rate, whenever we went by the spot on our way to or from town, a squirrel away up in a fir tree would chatter at us as we passed and there would be an answering greeting from all of us.

Every autumn, when the crops were stored, there was wood to lay in for the winter. Harry and the older boys would go out in the woods and saw down the trees and then cut them into stovewood lengths. There would be a big bonfire, and when it had

burned down I would bring the younger children and we would have supper in the woods—roasting potatoes in the glowing coals and apples at the edge of the fire. And there would be singing and merriment in the evening by a campfire built up with fragrant pine and fir boughs. Then the stars came out to light our way home—a happy ending to a busy day. And so the autumn passed and winter was again upon us, with its ice and snow, work and play, lessons and games.

But we would have been pretty smug had we thought that we could bring up our family entirely to suit ourselves, with no influence from the outside. About the best we could do was to give our children what we considered a good start. Our boys felt a responsibility for all of us as a family unit. The garden was ours, the orchard was ours, the cow, the chickens, and the fattening pig—and it was up to all of us to see that they got proper care, so that we could all enjoy their products—the vegetables, the fruit, the milk, the eggs, and the bacon. None of it was “mine,” or “yours,” but it was “ours.” We were not Swiss Family Robinson, cast up on a desert island. We had friends in and around town, and they had children, too, and soon their children and ours mingled, and a time came when I had to break up a mild gambling game—with marbles, for penny stakes—out behind the barn. And one day an older boy was heard teaching Willy to swear, and threatening to “beat him up” if he didn’t use certain vulgar language—out behind the barn. I soon found that

if I wanted to know just what was going on, when all was quiet, I should take a look—out behind the barn.

When Mary came along we were overjoyed. We had wanted a little girl for a long time. Because she was our first little sister, Mary received special consideration—everybody hushed when she was asleep, and she was treated like a little princess by all of us. At last I had a little girl to sew for, and I never tired of making pretty dresses for her. The boys vied with each other to help amuse her, and to take her out in her buggy for air and sunshine when warm spring days replaced the long and dreary winter.

After a severe winter, the ice in the river had gone out in a jam on the seventeenth of March—St. Patrick's Day. It did not always go out in this manner. Sometimes it just gradually melted, wearing thinner and thinner from underneath, getting more transparent and honey-combed, wearing away gradually from the middle of the stream where the current was strongest and finally cutting a channel that became wider each day, with great chunks sometimes breaking off from the sides. By St. Patrick's Day the river would be entirely open, with perhaps ten or fifteen feet of ice still clinging to the bank on each side of the stream.

It was when the ice went out in a rush, as it did this year, that it was really exciting. For days the water had been getting lower—the river seeming to shrink, and the ice cracking and settling on the water with cannonlike reports. This meant that higher up

the river, on the riffles, the ice was jammed and was rising in a higher and higher mound. Finally, with the warm air of spring and the pressure of the rising water behind it, the jam broke loose and the flood roared down, bringing huge cakes of ice with it and pushing them up on the bank sometimes twenty feet high. The breaking of the ice and the roaring of the water were like an earthquake, and for several years this occurred on the seventeenth of March.

## *Deer Hunting*

ONE WARM DAY in December we wanted some fresh venison so Harry took his rifle and went up the gulch to try to get a deer. Early in the afternoon he came back and reported that he had killed one, but that it had proved to be old and thin, and was unfit for food. "I'll go up later and drag it in for the chickens," he said.

The afternoon was warm and sunny, and I decided that I would like to take a walk up the gulch, just to get out in the fresh air and have a look at the deer Harry had shot. I thought perhaps the boys and I could drag it home.

There was a good covering of soft snow, and we took the hand sled. Of course all the boys wanted to go along, so we piled the younger ones onto the sled, and Willy and Ferd were the horses. "Just in case," said Harry, "you might as well take the gun along." So Harry stayed home with the baby while I took the five boys with me.

We were following Harry's tracks so as to find the deer that he had shot. Carlo ran up the gulch ahead of us. He was just as excited and happy as the boys—we were a merry company on this bright

winter day. Suddenly Carlo, now far up the gulch ahead of us, began to bark furiously. The barking came closer and closer, as if he were chasing something down toward us. Then we saw three deer running down along the side of the gulch, with Carlo close behind.

"Oh," shouted Willy, "you can get one of those. They're coming right past us."

I raised the gun, then lowered it. "What a shame, to kill the poor things," I said.

"Oh, shoot, Mama, shoot. Get the biggest one," shouted Ferd.

"Shoot, Mama, shoot," shouted all the boys in chorus.

The deer were just opposite us now, and seeing that the boys were all determined that I shoot, I raised the gun again and pulled the trigger. There was a loud report and a kick at my shoulder, and the smallest deer crumpled up with a loud "blaa" and came rolling down the mountainside.

"You've got him!" "Fine shot!" "Good work!" were some of the exclamations from the boys as the deer rolled to the bottom of the gulch and lay still. Carlo came up, wagging his tail in ecstasy, as much as to say, "Didn't I do all right, to chase those deer down to you?" I gave Willy the knife and told him and Ferd to dress out the deer. I was a little shaky, and felt that I had done enough butchering for one day.

We put a rope around the deer's neck, and Willy and Ferd dragged him home over the soft snow,



while I took charge of the sled. I pulled, while John and Paul pushed—with little Tom having his nap on the sled. The boys really thought that they were the big huntsmen as they came dragging home the deer—and what excitement and wild gesticulation as they explained to Papa just how it had happened—how Mama shot her first deer, a fine fat young buck.

Harry was surprised and well pleased, and said that he would send us out again when we needed more venison. Then he gave the boys a lesson in handling the meat—how to hang up the deer and skin it out, and how to quarter the meat properly. Then they hung the quarters behind the shed to freeze.

In our snowbound cabin we were snug and warm. While snowstorms howled outside, we had our lessons, our work, our games, and our stories. As usual, we had a supply of groceries for the winter, and the root cellar was filled with potatoes and other vegetables. On Saturdays, if the weather was reasonably good, Harry crossed the river on the ice and walked to town on the railroad track to get the mail, newspapers, and any items that we might need. And if the day was really fine, the rest of us usually felt the need of a little exercise and fresh air. So we would take the hand sled, load on the smaller children, and take a trip up the river on the ice. The one sitting up on the sled would hold the reins while, with jingling bells, some pulling and some pushing, we went merrily along, stopping at the spot

where cedar trees bent their branches down to cut limbs to take home for bows and arrows. Scanning the mountainside, we could usually see a number of deer sunning themselves on the cliffs. Coming back down the river in the early dusk, we would hurry our steps so as to be home in good time to do the chores and to have supper ready when Harry returned from town. Then we would hear the "crunch, crunch" on the brittle snow along the trail, and the "Yoo hoo! Yoo hoo!" as we greeted each other across the darkness.

## *An Emergency Operation*

WHEN JOHNNY was six he had a serious sick spell. Harry had gone to England on a business trip that spring, and my sister and her husband and two little boys had come to stay with us. Late in June, Johnny took sick, and we had Dr. Morrison come out to the ranch to see him. The doctor pronounced it appendicitis, and told me that the only thing to do was to take him to Kalispell for an operation.

My boy was very sick, and I knew that the trip would be very hard on him, but I decided to take a chance on his enduring it. I knew that he might die if he did not have the operation. So I left my little ones in the care of my sister. Little seven-months-old Mary was the hardest to leave. She resented it, too, and would not let Aunt Kate give her her bottle, but drank her milk from a cup. Brother Bob took me to town with my sick boy, and Dr. Morrison accompanied us to Kalispell.

As sick as little Johnny was, he looked out of the window of the train, taking notice of everything, and once he said, "Look at the deer!" Sure enough, two deer were drinking from a stream alongside the track. When we reached Columbia Falls,

there was a few minutes' wait for the spur to Kalispell, and Dr. Morrison brought me a cup of coffee and a piece of lemon pie. Johnny asked for some of the pie, and I asked the doctor if I should give him any.

He answered, "Yes, it won't hurt him."

"Oh, dear," I thought, "he doesn't think anything will hurt him now; he thinks Johnny is going to die." But I gave him a little of the pie.

We finally arrived at the hospital and an operation was arranged for the following morning. The nurse told me of a good place to stay but I wanted to be near so they let me stay at the hospital all night. The next morning the nurse brought me a cup of coffee and took Johnny to the operating room.

I waited anxiously, hoping and praying. After what seemed like an age of suspense they brought him in. Dr. Morrow came up to me and whispered, "I think he is going to be all right." Tears trickled down my cheeks and I breathed a prayer of thanks as I watched beside my boy. When he finally opened his eyes and held out his thin little hand to me, it was as though he had been given back to me from a far place.

Slowly but steadily he gained strength, and the doctors said that they considered him out of danger and Dr. Morrison returned to Libby. I had made several new friends now—Dr. Morrow's family, and the landlady where I stayed, were very good to me. Johnny recovered rapidly, and was beginning to amuse the nurses. There were no seriously ill patients in

the hospital at the time, so they permitted him considerable freedom—and he took full advantage of it. He would whistle for hours at a time, and one of the nurses would whistle with him "just to keep him on the track," as he lay patiently in his white bed.

It was nearing the Fourth of July, and the doctor brought him several bunches of firecrackers; and my landlady's daughter, Pansy, brought him a cap pistol. He started firing the cap pistol before the nurse could stop him and explain that he would have to wait until he could be outside. One day he pulled all the rubber tubes out of his incision. The nurse was frightened, and sent for the doctor. He asked Johnny why he had done that. He answered promptly, "Well, I didn't want the darn things in there."

One night he told the nurse, "I wantahanky."

"What did you say, Johnny?" asked the nurse.

"I wantahanky," he repeated.

She shook her head. "Do you want something, Johnny?"

"Yes," said Johnny, firmly, "I wantahanky to bow my node with."

She finally caught on, and brought him a handkerchief.

On the afternoon of the Fourth of July, Dr. and Mrs. Morrow took Johnny and me out for a drive. We rode around town and then out into the country where the cherry trees were laden with their red fruit and the green fields stretched out on every side. On the lawn of the doctor's home Johnny

and the doctor's little girl shot off the firecrackers and fired his cap pistol to their hearts' content. Then Mrs. Morrow served cookies and lemonade. It was good to see poor little Johnny lively and happy again.

Shortly after that we made the journey home. Happy was our homecoming as the other children crowded around to examine Johnny, who was as white as wax and very thin. But he was beaming with happiness at being home again.

On a warm day in late September, when the apples were ripening and the plums hung purple on the trees, there was a cablegram saying that Harry was on his way home from England. As always, he brought many nice things. It was like Christmas when the trunks and boxes were opened, and everyone had his remembrance from Grandma and Auntie. Harry marveled at the way the children had grown—especially the baby and little Tom. He took Johnny on his knee and told him that he would have to fatten up a little or Paul would surely catch up with him. While the children played with their new games and looked at their new books, Harry and I walked arm in arm, inspecting the garden, the orchard, and the chickens. Finally we went to stand by the river and listen to its calm murmur as the sun slanted toward a bank of ruddy clouds in the west. It was good to have Harry home again—to feel his protective arm around me once more.

## *School Days*

THE SCHOOL BOARD finally decided that there were enough children on the north side of the river to warrant a country school. We had given our children a good enough start so that Bill and Ferd went into the fifth grade, and John and Paul went into the third. Tom, who was not quite six, was a first grader. There were some ten or twelve children besides ours—the Nobles from across the river, the Herbstes from Sheldon Gulch, the Bennetts, and the Bakkers.

Our first teacher, Carrie Downing, was young and inexperienced, but what she lacked in experience she made up for in enthusiasm. On warm days she took the children all up on the cliffs at noon for their lunch—picnic style. And they went on field trips to learn about minerals, flowers, and wildlife. This would have been fine, except that some of the older boys took advantage of it—they would see how many woodticks they could corral in their inkwells, and one boy took a little garter snake out of his pocket and turned it loose on the floor. Miss Downing almost fainted. Then Bill—he wasn't "Willy" any more—had a brilliant idea. He found a two-inch-

long water bug and put it under the school bell one morning. Oh, what a shock for the poor teacher. When she picked up the bell—things started happening! It didn't take her long to find the culprit, and Bill got a good scolding. He began to cry, then the teacher—who could not bear to see a child cry—cried too. School was late getting started that morning.

Soon Mary was going to school, too, although she was not quite five. Carrie Downing, on one of her visits to our home, watched her reading Tom's primer, and forthwith decided that she should come to school—she needed her to make a third in the first grade.

I remonstrated. "Why, we cannot even understand what she is saying."

"Well," said Carrie, "she can."

So I gave in. I thought that as long as the weather was not too severe it would not hurt her, and she did so want to go. She became Tom's special charge—they went to school hand in hand. Tom never ran away from her; even when the other boys were far ahead, Tom always stayed with little Mary.

Once, when they were coming home, they saw an animal lying on a rocky ledge up on the cliffs near the Slim Fredericks cabin. It waved its long tail slowly as it lay watching them. "It looked like a big cat," said Tom. We decided that it must have been a mountain lion, and after that we had the children come home together as there was safety in numbers. They never saw a lion again, but it was



not unusual to see deer and their little fawns in the early spring, and grouse, wild rabbits, and even a coyote occasionally as they walked to and from school.

At home there was three-year-old Allen now, and Alice, with golden hair and big blue eyes. Miss Downing was sure that Alice would be a great scholar because she would stand up in her crib with a book and "read" by the hour, turning the pages and looking around to see if we were looking, then jabbering all the louder.

If Miss Downing had a great deal of enthusiasm, I must have had a good share also at that time. Together we soon had a Sunday school in operation in the schoolhouse. All the Protestant families for several miles around were represented—even the parents coming occasionally. The Presbyterian Sunday school of Libby provided us with lesson papers and other supplies to make the venture interesting and Carrie Downing and I conducted the Sunday school as long as we had school there. She suggested that I bring my guitar to play the accompaniments to the hymns, and this helped greatly with the singing, which we all enjoyed. We even took in a few nickels to add to the Libby Sunday school treasury.

When Bill was about twelve he discovered bullheads in the river. It was March. A few days earlier the boys had made a snowman on the ice after a fresh fall of snow, and they had watched him float away, along with the old Christmas tree, on a cake of ice that had broken off in the spring breakup. Now they were playing along the river where mil-

lions of little trout flies were hatching and crawling out of the river over rocks and patches of crusty snow. The boys were looking for hellgrammites for fish bait, or frogs or minnows—anything that might do for bait, as we wanted to set some night fish lines and try to catch a char or bull trout.

Then Bill found something among the rocks that appeared to be neither a frog nor a fish, but looked like a huge polliwog or tadpole. It was wedge-shaped, with a large head tapering down to a slender tail. It darted out from beneath a rock in the water, and Bill caught it in his hand; then, looking closely among the rocks, he found several more. They looked good for bait, and he called them bullheads because of their shape. That night we set out several lines. Next morning, every hook that had been baited with a bullhead had a queer eel-like fish on it—a slim mottled fish without scales. By consulting the encyclopedia we found that they were fresh-water cod, or ling.

Setting out ling lines in the early spring became one of our regular customs. Besides finding out that the ling is a night feeder, we learned that the best time to catch the bait was on a dark, moonless night with the aid of a light. First we used pitch flares, then carbide lamps, and later flashlights—spearing them with a sharp-tined fork securely tied to a two-foot stick. We all took part in the bait catching, each with his little light and his spear, and a can of water to put the bullheads into. Then we set out the lines. Early the next morning there was a great

scramble, as we ran down to the river to pull up our lines, anxious to see who had caught the most fish. The ling weigh from two to five pounds, generally, but once we caught an eight-pounder, using a frog for bait. Sometimes there would be as many as eight or ten fish on a single line, one on each hook; sometimes only one, or none at all.

One morning Harry came running in for the .45-70 rifle. "A coyote!" he said. The coyote was sitting up like a dog, on the knoll back of the house. We could see it from the back window as we peered out. It was evidently taking inventory of the chicken yard. Harry walked cautiously out behind the house and fired. It was a good shot—right through the heart. It was the biggest coyote we had ever seen.

Harry used to reload the shells for the old .45-70. He had a bullet mould and a small iron kettle in which to melt the lead that came in flat bars about an inch wide and eight or ten inches long. He also had a powder measure. The powder came in cans—like small flat tobacco cans. We bought empty brass shells, too, as the shells would not stand reloading very many times. For a long while after Harry bought a .30-30 rifle, the old .45-70 was used to usher in every Fourth of July, when each boy was allowed to take one shot with it while aiming at the solid mountainside. The report was terrifying—it reverberated among the mountains and re-echoed from across the river, and it left wide smiles of satisfaction on the faces of the happy boys. No matter what we planned to do for the rest of the day—

whether to attend the celebration in town or to go on a picnic and fishing trip to some stream that was waiting to be explored—the first thing was to let the world know that the Fourth had arrived, with a good big loud report! Carlo would jump around excitedly, then look inquiringly into our faces, as though to ask what it was all about and what he was supposed to do. Then he would decide it was all in fun, and he would whirl around and try to catch his tail, then run a ways and come back and roll on the ground, as though he had caught the holiday spirit from the boys and was trying to say “Gee this is fun!”

We were still enjoying our main meal out of doors. On the east side of the house, in the shade of a wide-spreading elderberry bush, was a sturdily built table, with benches on each side, where on most summer days we had our family dinner. Harry had his arm-chair at one end, and at the other end of the table was my chair and the baby's high chair. From the kitchen I handed the food and dishes out through the open window to one or two of the boys, to be set on the table. There was usually a main dish—stew, baked beans, or a meat pie, or a big platter of fried venison chops, or trout, with baked or boiled potatoes, and one or two other vegetables. During August there was usually a big platter of corn on the cob, a favorite dish, and raw vegetables such as radishes, green onions, and lettuce. Always there was a plate piled high with hot biscuits or raggedly-cut homemade bread. For dessert there were applesauce

and cookies, or perhaps apple pie or cherry cobbler. Harry and I had hot tea, but the children drank tall glasses of milk. I can still see, looking down through the years, all that food disappearing as if by magic, and the willing hands helping to clean up the dishes afterwards, with hardly enough scraps left over to feed Carlo.

All through the years there were our impromptu late-day picnics, when we piled into the wagon and drove to some nearby creek for an evening's fishing, and spread our lunch in a shady place by the water. These were the things that kept the days from being humdrum. We always found something new on these trips; perhaps a new spot where the fairy flowers grew, those tiny pink daisies, blue snapdragons, yellow asters and white forget-me-nots. Often we found lady's-slippers, moccasin flowers, and trilliums, and near the water, in the deep shade, we found shy yellow and white wood violets. And there would always be new rock specimens for someone's collection, with Harry explaining that these pretty rocks were quartz, carrying perhaps small quantities of gold or silver. Also awaiting discovery were butterflies, beetles, or bugs that were different or rare. And always someone would discover a new or unusual bird, and Harry would have to "look it up" when we returned home, to find out its name.

Our old horse, Billy, plodded lazily along for the boys as they hauled in our wood, potatoes and other vegetables, apples, or even our hay when the harvest was in progress. He was gentle, also lazy. His

hide was tough, and he apparently felt the whip no more than if a fly had lit on his back. Still, without the whip he would stop completely, so it was important to carry one. Then one day Billy stepped on a nail and became lame, so Dick, the other one of the team of grays, was put into service. Dick had at one time been a high-spirited horse. He was old now, and gentle enough, but occasionally he still showed signs of his livelier days. When you flicked him a little with the whip, he jumped, threw up his head, and trotted briskly along for a few minutes, then subsided into a walk. So he was "Frisky Dick" to the children. He was a wonderful trotter, and the boys were very proud to be driving him, but they were never sure of him—they always felt that he might run away. There was really very little danger of this, as he was only slightly less lazy than old Billy.

Harry and the boys were haying—harvesting the second cutting of alfalfa. We had our first horse-drawn mowing machine now, as we now had some twenty acres to cut—also a horse-drawn rake to gather the hay into windrows. The boys helped pile the hay into shocks and load it onto the hayrack. What fun it was to ride on the soft, bouncy hay to the barn loft.

There was an acre or two of wheat, too, which Harry still cradled by hand, and which the boys learned to tie into bundles. These were then hauled to the hayloft over the chicken house and then fed, a bundle at a time, to the chickens, who did their

own thrashing. When the hay had all been brought in, and the grain was stored away, we heard that the huckleberries were ripe, so we planned a trip to the American Kootenai Mine on the West Fisher River.

## *A Family Huckleberry Trip*

EVERYTHING WAS packed and ready the night before. Every available pail was brought forth—five- and ten-pound lard pails, as well as five-gallon coal-oil cans. Our provisions were packed in tight wooden boxes which would be used later for storing the berries. Just at the faintest sign of dawn our old red rooster woke us with lusty, clarion calls—his greeting to the new day. Usually this meant that we had another hour or two to sleep. This morning, however, I heard a rustling and a whispering, as Bill and Ferd came quietly downstairs; then I could hear them starting the fire in the kitchen.

These boys were drowsy enough, usually, but when there was an adventure ahead—a fishing or a hunting trip, a Fourth-of-July celebration, Christmas, or an occasion such as this, a week's outing to gather huckleberries and to fish—they were up before dawn. I heard the kitchen door open and shut, and I knew that they had gone out to feed the horses. I got up and soon had breakfast cooking, and got the smaller children up and dressed them—helped them dress. The boys came in and started loading up the wagon—bedding, the tent, boxes of provisions, oats for



the horses, and fishing tackle. Harry, who had chosen to remain at home to look after the ranch, directed the loading and made sure that the wagon wheels were properly greased and the harness in good repair. He gave a few parting instructions about the care of the horses and told us of a good place to camp for the first night.

It was five-thirty when, breakfast over and everything ready, we climbed into the wagon and started on our way. It was chilly, and the horses started off at a brisk trot.

When we had gone about ten miles, we stopped for lunch beside Libby Creek, sheltered from the midday sun by a spreading fir tree. We rested here for an hour, giving the horses a measure of oats and a drink from the creek, then letting them graze on the lush grass. The boys gulped their sandwiches and doughnuts, then grabbed their fishing tackle and ran down to the creek to try their luck. They caught a few nice trout while I rested with the younger children, and it was hard to convince them that we would have to be on our way in order to make camp for the night well before dark. So they cleaned their fish and packed them in thimbleberry leaves.

Ten or twelve miles farther along—dusty, hot and tired—we stopped to make camp for the night on the West Fisher near the Tom Degan place. While Bill and Ferd gathered wood for the fire and took care of the horses, I unloaded some of the bedding and cooking utensils from the wagon with the help of the younger boys. I soon had coffee boiling and

supper spread on a red-checked tablecloth in a shady spot by the water. After a hasty supper, we all went fishing, and before darkness settled down we had a nice mess of fish for our breakfast. "Come on, boys," I called, "clean your fish, and let's have a big bonfire." Reluctantly they came, and while two of them cleaned the fish, the others hobbled Dick and strapped a bell on Billy's neck and turned them out for the night. We sat around the bonfire for a time, making plans for the following day, but we soon felt drowsy and were ready for bed at an early hour. I slept in the wagon with the younger children, and the older boys slept on the ground near the smoldering campfire. During the night I could hear the tinkling of the horse bell and the gurgling of the creek near by.

When the sky was brightening in the east we were up and preparing for the day ahead. I was soon busy frying trout for breakfast while Bill and Ferd caught the horses and gave them their oats. The boys fashioned some long, pointed sticks and we all made our own toast—like toasting marshmallows. Mary cuddled up close to me. She liked the trout but always had trouble with the bones, and wanted to be where Mommy could help her. Bill helped little Allen with his fishbones, and little Alice, sitting in my lap, got an occasional piece from my plate.

When we had finished our breakfast—or practically finished it—the boys thought up something new—they started toasting doughnuts. After all,

there was a lovely bed of coals and all those nice pointed sticks. The doughnuts, toasted over the coals, proved delicious.

Soon we had everything loaded into the wagon, and with a last lingering look at our lovely camping spot and the eddies where we had caught the trout the previous night, we were off again on the last lap of our journey. From here on the road was mostly uphill and the horses had to have frequent stops for rest. As we got up into the higher mountains, huckleberry bushes were to be seen on both sides of the road, sparsely sprinkled with berries at first, then more plentifully as we came nearer our destination. We were all eager to have a taste of the first berries of the season, so Tom jumped off the wagon during one of the brief stops and filled a small pail with berries, handing it to me to pass around so that everyone could have a taste. Later, when the berries were more plentiful, Ferd cut a loaded branch for each of us. We acted like monkeys, picking off each berry and popping it into our mouths, thoroughly enjoying the luscious flavor.

Tired and dusty, we finally reached our camp site, unhitched the sweating horses, and unloaded the wagon. The sun was already nearing the western horizon, and the slanting shadows warned us that dusk was not far off. So we set to work putting up the tent, gathering green fir boughs for the beds, and bringing in a great pile of wood for the fire.

After taking care of the horses, Bill found a pitch stump and chopped a box of chips for starting the

fire quickly. From the nearby creek—really the head of the West Fisher River—we dipped pails of clear icy water.

Here was a beautiful spot, at the bottom of a deep gulch. The American Kootenai Mine was located on the mountainside to the left. It was an abandoned mine at the time. The Little Annie was later discovered on the right slope of the gulch, and the old "Brick and Branagan" property was just over the ridge from the American Kootenai. The Midas Mine is not far down the gulch. All were good producers in their time.

But let's get back to our huckleberries. Having had supper and lingered for a time by the campfire, watching the sparks mount to the blackness of the sky, we gratefully got into our fir-bough beds in the tent, and were soon lulled to sleep by the trickle of water over the stones and the sighing of the wind in the tall treetops. By sunup we had already had our breakfast, and were on our way up the steep trail on the mountainside. We were well supplied with empty pails, and Bill and Ferd had packsacks which held five-gallon oil cans. They carried Allen and little Alice up the steep trail that zigzagged back and forth toward the old mine. In a level dip in the side of the gulch we found a nice patch of berries and stopped to pick for a short while. Then the boys scattered out to look for better patches.

A big blue grouse flew up at our very feet with a great fluttering of wings and sailed smoothly down the mountainside. A snowshoe rabbit skipped across

the trail and was lost to us in the thick underbrush. The higher up we went, the bigger berries we found. Over to the right, Bill shouted, "Huckleberries!" and we knew that he had found a good patch, so we made our way toward him. But before reaching there we found another fine patch, then another and another. On the other side Ferd was calling to tell that he had found the biggest patch of all! Each new discovery brought added excitement. We had never seen such an abundance of fine berries. We finally agreed to continue on to the mine, and there, where we found a lovely spring, we ate our lunch.

After a short rest in the shade, we left our full pails in a protected place and climbed still farther up the mountain to get a better view of the surrounding country and to scout around for more berries. Looking down from the top of the ridge we could see miles and miles of dark green forest, with the road winding in and out like a white ribbon until it was lost in the distance. Far below we located the West Fisher—now a tiny stream flashing in the sunlight as it tumbled down a steep ravine over boulders, into wide pools and through narrow channels, then out again, clear and deep. Here and there in the distance we could see little clearings in the forest, with a thread of blue smoke coming from a cabin home; and much farther off a haze of smoke where Libby was located. Across the canyon, on a neighboring mountain towering above the rest, there were great patches of snow that apparently never melted.

"They say there are mountain goats up there that stay near the snow line all summer," said Ferd, looking wistfully toward the mountaintop. "Wish I could see some of them."

The berries were not so plentiful at this elevation, however, some of them being still quite green, so we started back toward camp, stopping at every good patch to fill the rest of our pails.

We picked our way down the mountain trail to our camp with our load of berries weighting us down. Soon we had a crackling fire and were busy preparing supper. The early dusk of the mountains was stealing in upon us as we gathered around the supper table. We found that there was another huckleberry camp located about a quarter mile below us. These campers had a cleaning slide—a large piece of canvas, supported by poles, and slanting at an angle. They would pour their berries from the top of the slide to clean them—the leaves and stems sticking to the canvas and the clean berries rolling to the bottom onto a clean canvas. These people very graciously let us use their slide to clean our berries each evening. When the berries had been stored by the creek in boxes, the fire was built up to spread warmth and light around, and we sat for a time reviewing the happenings of the day. Hearing the call of a coyote in the distance, we were reminded that it was time for bed. After a restful night, we were up early the next morning, ready for another full day of climbing, exploring, and berry picking.

By that night our boxes and pails were completely filled, and we were also getting a little tired of climbing the steep mountain trail. The boys had been casting longing glances at the water, which was really only a small creek away up here, but they assured me that they could see trout in the deeper pools, and they begged to stay another day to fish. So the next morning we slept a little later than usual—but not as late as I would have liked. Before sunup I could hear the fire crackling and the hungry boys starting breakfast. We practiced flipping pancakes in the long-handled frying pan. Occasionally one landed in the fire, but we finally got enough cooked so that everyone was satisfied. By ten o'clock the sun had warmed the cold mountain air and dried the dew from the underbrush. Equipped with willow fish poles, the five older boys started down the creek to seek likely-looking places to try their luck. It wasn't long until I could hear by their glad shouts that they were catching some trout. I walked down along the creek with the three younger children. We found some wild blackcap raspberry bushes loaded with fruit. One big bush, with canes six feet long, had been crushed down, evidently by a bear, who had feasted on the berries. We saw many pretty flowers—flowers that we did not find at lower elevations—Indian paintbrush, columbine, snapdragons.

The boys discovered better and better fishing the farther they went downstream, and by midafternoon they were satisfied with their catch. One by one

they returned to camp with a string of trout dangling from a forked stick.

About five days of this camping out, sleeping on fir boughs at night, will satisfy the most ardent camper and put into his head longing thoughts of home. On our fifth morning out we were satisfied to start back. Besides our harvest of huckleberries we had a nice mess of trout, packed in damp grass to keep them fresh and cool. The team was hitched up, the wagon loaded, and we moved down the long, winding mountain road toward home. It was a long, hot, dusty ride, and we were grateful when we reached our favorite camp site, near the Degan place, where we would spend the night.

Early the next morning, after a hasty breakfast, we were off again. At Libby Creek we stopped for an hour for lunch and to let the horses rest. Now we were all as eager to get home as we had been to start out a week earlier. We were tired and dusty and sunburned when we reached home, getting a hearty welcome from Harry. Around the supper table we took turns giving him enthusiastic accounts of our adventures. For the next two weeks we had huckleberries at practically every meal—huckleberries with cream and sugar, huckleberry sauce, huckleberry cobbler, and huckleberry pie—and I canned many quarts of huckleberry sauce for the winter.



## *Our Pet Fawn*

DAISY, OUR LITTLE fawn, was a very gentle and lovable pet. One day in late spring Ferd had found her down in the field where she lay, quite exhausted, having been chased by strange dogs. She was so young and delicate that for some weeks we had to feed her warm milk from a baby bottle and nipple. Mary was very fond of her, and always prepared her bottle and fed her. She was never tied up or fenced in, and would wander where she pleased, going quite far away at times, especially on the brushy hillside back from the house. But no matter where she was, or what time of day it was, she always came running, meowing like a kitten, when Mary called her. She loved to be petted, and was very playful with all the children.

She would pick daintily at the grass on the lawn, and nip the tender tips from the rose and lilac bushes. She also liked to steal lettuce and young cabbage leaves from our garden. One day I found her jumping up and down on the pepper plants, where I had made little ditches to irrigate them. She was having great fun splashing in the mud puddle she had made.

One evening in the autumn she failed to come

home. We called and called, and went up on the hillside looking for her, but she was nowhere to be found. The next morning, after the children had gone to school, I found her out near the woodshed. She was lying in a little hollow place, and was panting for breath. The red ribbon bow on her neck was limp with dew, and her coat was rough. I lifted her up and saw that she had been shot with a .22-caliber rifle. Some cruel, thoughtless boy had wounded her, and I doubted whether her life could be saved. She struggled to her feet and came slowly toward the kitchen door with me, begging to come in. Once inside, she went toward the fireplace in the living room, where she lay down on the hearth and died.

It was a sad homecoming for the children. They buried little Daisy down below the spring, and we all mourned her loss for a long while.

*Harvesttime*

POTATO DIGGING is as interesting as you make it. With us it was a family project, the whole family taking part. The potato digger, drawn by Frisky Dick, turned the potatoes out of the sandy loam. Then the fun began—the boys competing to see which one could fill his pail first, and which one could find the biggest potato.

"Mine's full!" shouted Bill.

"Mine's full!" shouted John. So it was with each one in turn, and they laughed when Papa had to stop to empty each boy's pail as he held the sack open. At the end of the day's digging, Dick was hitched up to the stoneboat and the potatoes were loaded on, topped by squealing youngsters, and hauled to the cellar. Those who managed to stay on through the three jumps that Frisky Dick always took to get started had a good chance to ride home; but those who fell off in the soft, loose soil, amid shrieks of laughter, might catch up and jump on again and they might not.

There was also our apple crop to harvest—luscious big red apples. It was fun to pick them, but they had to be handled gently as eggs lest they be bruised.

One summer we raised a few geese. They were very interesting, and were a pretty sight as they swam about, gracefully, in the river, but we had a costly experience with them during apple-picking time. We had picked apples all day, and they were in covered wooden boxes under the trees, ready to be taken to town the next day. We had decided to have supper, and load them into the wagon in the cool of the evening. But while we were at supper the geese invaded the orchard. Through the cracks in the boxes, the apples showed up, red and tempting. The geese visited every box, and all the apples that could be seen through the cracks had holes pecked in them. We had no kind words or kind thoughts for our geese at that point—having to reopen all those boxes and replace the damaged apples. The ground was strewn with windfall apples, but these, of course, they had not touched!

We had rabbits, too, at various times. At first it was a pet rabbit or two, then there were cute baby rabbits, and then there were too many rabbits. So we decided to butcher some of them, and that day we had fried rabbit for supper. But when little Alice, with tears in her eyes, asked, "Pass the bunny, please," we somehow lost our appetites.

We had another interesting Indian visitor. He appeared among us in the yard one day, without warning. He was an old fellow, not in Indian dress, but wearing a black coat and trousers and a black slouch hat. His long gray hair hung down over his shoulders. He spoke with a soft, gentle voice, and

he used fairly good English. He asked for fishing tackle, and I gave him some. He caught a grasshopper on the lawn, and pulling a hair out of his head, he carefully tied the grasshopper to the hook and left, going up along the riverbank.

In a couple of hours he was back and laid ten or twelve nice trout—strung on a forked willow—on a bench in the yard. "You give me flour, sugar, tobacco?" he asked.

"Watch out," I said, interrupting him, "the cats are going to eat your fish."

"Not my fish," he told me. "Your fish!"

I motioned to the boys and had them take the fish into the house, away from the always-hungry barnyard mousers. I bargained with our caller.

"Me Seymour," he said, "Joe Seymour."

"Where do you live, Mr. Seymour?" I asked.

"Me come Bonners Ferry, go Kalispell," he said.

"All alone?" I asked.

He shook his head. "No," he said, "me and Lizzy. We go Kalispell, west side big sleeping water, two sons there."

So I gave him the flour, sugar and tobacco, and he went back toward Libby to his Lizzy who was probably resting along the trail, waiting for him to return with food for their supper. How he caught so many fish in the river in such a short time I could not imagine, but these natives are skillful fishermen.

Later, through the years, Indians would pitch their tepees near town and go out among the people bar-

tering for deer hides, which they paid for with buckskin gloves and moccasins which the squaws made. The men dressed in our conventional clothing and usually wore their hair short. The women wore colorful cotton dresses and gay bandannas, and their hair in long braids.

More recently still, they have been coming to this area each fall—hundreds of them—to pick huckleberries, which they sell for cash. Their favorite camping place is up in the Fisher River country. Instead of the horse-drawn travois, which they used in the early days to move their whole families from place to place, they travel in modern cars. When the huckleberry crop is good, this spot is a large-sized Indian village, with a store and dozens of tents and tepees. There are beautiful dusky maidens and handsome young braves, middle-aged couples with many papooses, and grandparents, old and wrinkled.

Halloween has been another special day for us through the years. One fall, when Halloween came around, we had worked in the woods all day—clearing the land and sawing up the logs for firewood for the winter. It was still pleasant weather, with frosty nights and warm afternoons. We had brought up the biggest pumpkin from the cellar the night before to make a jack-o'-lantern. We had practiced on smaller ones—even transforming big red apples into funny faces lighted with tiny candles left over from the previous Christmas. Then Harry helped

the boys to make a fine big jack-o'-lantern out of the prize pumpkin.

We had made a bigger bonfire than usual that day, and we sat around it late into the evening. After the potatoes and apples were roasted and we had had our supper, Harry told us ghost stories until our teeth chattered and the children wanted to go home. It was getting dark when we came in sight of the house.

"Goodness! What was that near the gate? Was it a ghost?" Its grinning face could plainly be seen as we came nearer. The smaller children clung to my skirts and to Harry's hands. Little Alice began to cry. Then Harry told them that it was only the big jack-o'-lantern on the gatepost—that he had gone to the house earlier and put it up there to fool them and to make Halloween seem more real. We all laughed and thought it a great joke. Even little Alice said it was "a funny punky-man" and laughed with the rest of us. Then, when the lamps were lit, Bill had to have his joke, so he sneaked outside, lit the jack-o'-lantern and held it before the window so that it looked like a "spook" peering in at us. But this time the younger ones were not fooled, little Alice saying, "See, there punky-man again." Everybody laughed, and the jokester was invited to come in and let everybody take turns holding the punky-man. When the funny face no longer held any terror for them, they put him on the window sill and listened to a happy bedtime story.

## *The Flood*

WE LOVE THE Kootenai River. All through the summer months it ripples over its pebbly bed and creates a picture restful and serene. In winter the quietness is complete—the icebound river sleeping beneath its coat of ice and snow. In the spring it awakens, fed by the melting snows of winter, and presents quite a different picture. Late in the spring of 1916 we were caught in a devastating flood.

Twice we had had short periods of warm weather, resulting in the usual runoff on the lower slopes; but higher up, in the Canadian mountains, the snow still lay deep and solid. It had been a late spring, and it was near the end of May before the hot weather really came—and then it was sudden and sizzling. Then came June—the month of roses and high water. For several days the river had been rising steadily. In front of the house it was within a foot of the top of the bank—if it continued hot for another day or two, it would be over the bank. Already, in the low places in the orchard, and in the clearing below the house, the water was beginning to seep through and stand in puddles. Mosquitoes were buzzing about us everywhere. The river was



a muddy brown and logs, bridge timbers, whole trees, and all kinds of debris were being carried downstream by the swirling, murky torrent. Harry drove another stake, marked with inches, at the edge of the water, which was rising at the rate of an inch an hour. If it continued like this for another day, we would have to move out of our house.

By evening the cellar was half full of water, and in the low places in the field it was several feet deep. We were surrounded by water! The next morning, the lower part of the clearing was a lake, with logs and driftwood floating up on the land. Four acres of potatoes were under water. Our meat safe was floating with the logs, having been jarred from its platform in the shade. And there was no change in the weather.

Several ranchers down the river had already moved to higher ground. Hoodoo Joe was out in a boat in his field, going to the rescue of hens marooned on stumps. When he would come near enough to grab one, it would fly off in fright, and land, fluttering, in the water. Then he would paddle alongside and scoop up the poor half-drowned hen with a fish net and stuff it into a box in the boat.

In town the water covered both sides of the railroad track, and was getting nearer and nearer to the business section. The new bridge at Libby was threatened, the piers being jammed with logs and trees. Loud reports re-echoed for miles around as the log jams were blasted out to relieve the terrific

pressure on the piers. The heat was oppressive, and the water rose steadily.

"Well," said Harry, his stake registering another two inches, "I guess there is nothing for it but to move. In another day the water will be in the house."

"Whoopee!" shouted the boys.

Camping out was not so bad as far as they were concerned—it would be a good lark. And they helped with the moving just as enthusiastically as though they were going on a real camping trip.

Where to? There was a spring of good clear water on the bench overlooking the lower part of the ranch—that part not yet cleared. Here we decided to pitch our tents. By means of a raft made of logs and boards we crossed the lowland, which was now a running channel. Load after load of food and clothing, bedding, cooking utensils, and dishes were poled across the water and hauled up near the spring on the bench. Everything that was left in the house was put up out of reach of the water should it come in. The willing hands of many boys now, if never before, proved a blessing. Light hearts and the optimism of youth changed a calamity into a vacationtime lark!

Two tents were put up for sleeping, and a lean-to for a general-purpose tent. There was an abundance of wood for all kinds of fires—fires for cooking, bonfires, and smudge fires to keep the annoying mosquitoes away.

My rose bushes in the front yard were full of buds, and it was with a feeling of regret that they

were left behind. The water rose steadily and when the chickens went to roost it was within a couple of feet of the chicken house and steadily creeping up. That night Harry and the boys finished the moving by catching the chickens by lantern light off their roosts, putting them in boxes, and taking them to our camp site. There were fifty or sixty hens and two hundred young chicks. Near the spring was a small woodcutter's cabin, which served as a chicken house. Here they were safely shut in, and their camping days began.

Our noon meal had been a cold lunch and it had been a long, hard day. We looked forward eagerly to a good supper—late as it was. We ate by moonlight, with a big bonfire for additional light and heat. We had a big kettle of mulligan stew, rhubarb sauce, bread and butter, and plenty of milk. Little nine-month-old Buzz rolled around happily on his blanket in front of the fire. His coppery curls were damp from the heat, and he jabbered with delight. This life agreed with him.

Below us the moon shone down on the swollen river, sullen and menacing; up here, all was light-hearted gaiety. The family, at least, was happy enough and safe enough. Our faithful dog lay by the fire, looking expectantly for stray scraps. He seemed ill at ease, puzzled by all the excitement. He was reassured when a plate of food was put down for him, and he jumped up, wagging his tail in appreciation.

We washed the dishes and put them away in a box under the edge of the lean-to. Then we built

up the fire and sat around, talking over our escape from the angry waters, and guessing as to the present height of the river. Later, as I lay sleepless in my tent, listening to the thunder and roar of the treacherous stream, my mind dwelt on the destruction of our crops—the loss of all that we had worked so hard to gain—our newly cleared land, our potato crop, our hayfield. The fruits of our toil had literally been washed away!

The next morning I was mixing the hot-cake batter when the boys, sticking their heads out of the tent, looked around at a damp and cool world, greeted me, "Breakfast ready, Mom?"

"Yes," I answered, "it will be ready as soon as you are. You can get a pail of water from the spring, and wash up and set the table for me." We ate heartily—oatmeal mush, hot cakes and syrup, coffee, and big tin cups of milk.

After breakfast we all took a walk up to the house, to see how things looked. There was water in the house, six inches deep, and it was still rising. The chance of having any crops grew dimmer. So that evening we held a family council to discuss what we could do to make up for our loss of income. It was decided that we would cut wood for market. So Harry and the boys made a trip back to the house and brought all the axes, saws, wedges, and sledge hammers that they could find. Soon the woods rang as they sawed down trees, cut up logs, split the blocks into small pieces, and piled them up in long rows to season. Every day they added to their

woodpiles, working mornings and evenings and having to rest in the shade during the hot afternoons. They also made frequent trips down to the house to mark the state of the flood. Now there was a foot of water in the house, and most all of the cleared land was under water, with more and more logs and debris floating in the field and down the road.

The hens were laying more eggs than we needed, so we packed them in crates to sell—at least to trade for groceries. As the road was covered with water, Harry and the older boys loaded the crates on horses and led the animals to town over the old Indian trail which ran up around cliffs and through gulches far above the flooded road. On the way back, the horses were loaded with groceries.

Still the river continued to rise, and there were now nearly two feet of water in the house. A stream flowed through what had been the potato patch, and logs floated all over the clearing and were piled up against stumps in the lower field. Up in the orchard the water was knee-deep. A field of alfalfa which we had just planted, along the riverbank below the house, was all washed out, and the garden was completely under water.

Then at last the weather suddenly turned cold. On the morning of the twenty-first of June the ground was covered with snow! A cold rain set in and camping out became pretty uncomfortable. The baby and the younger children had to stay in—they played on the beds in the tents. The older boys did not mind being out—they played tag and leapfrog

under the trees. One afternoon we heard our dog barking furiously down toward the road. Looking in that direction from the edge of the bench, we saw a deer swimming along the road below our camp, our dog chasing the poor animal. Some time later the dog came home, wet and tired, and nothing more was seen of the deer. For two days the river was at a standstill, then slowly but surely it began to recede. The rain stopped, and the weather grew warmer. But the flood was over! Inch by inch the river dropped, leaving behind it mud and debris. One day the boys brought me a big bouquet of red roses. They had bloomed in spite of their being almost completely submerged.

At last the water was all out of the house, and the fields were no longer flooded. But our home was a sorry sight. Everything was covered with a layer of slimy gray mud, and we were reluctant to move back. We all liked the fresh, clean air up at our camping place, and we found the house, and everything around it, very unpleasant and damp and musty.

The garden was not a total loss after all, as the vegetables started to grow again after the water drained off. The potatoes, however, had been completely washed out, and the following winter we substituted rice for our usual potatoes at many a meal. The trees in the orchard were loaded with fruit, the only apparent damage being that the little green apples were blotched and scabby from the excessive moisture. Around the camp were piles of

wood on every side, so, after all, the summer had not been entirely wasted.

But we could not camp out indefinitely. The nights were already quite cool, and school would start soon—so we must get settled in our house again. There were many days of cleaning and scrubbing before it was made habitable, and there were years of hard work ahead to reclaim the land that had been submerged.

## *Our New House*

BY MID-AUGUST the blue of the sky was reflected in the green waters of the river once more. Trout leaped in its rippling eddies, and many a nice mess of fish found its way to our table. We were settled again in our log-cabin home, and life went on as before.

In Manchester, England, Harry's mother had been in failing health for some time, and she and Harry were the only remaining members of the family. It was imperative that he make yet another trip back to the old home. One day early in September we said good-by again and steeled ourselves for another long separation.

It was June of the following year when Harry returned to us. His aged mother had died, and he had disposed of the family home—packing the personal effects and pictures and much of their beautiful china and silverware to bring back with him. He had realized enough from the estate to improve the farm and build a larger house for his growing family.

We immediately started making plans for our new home. We would build on the same site where we



had camped during the flood the previous summer—on the bench near the little spring—not more than a half mile from our cabin. Having a liking for drawing and sketching—perhaps inherited from my father who was an architect—I set about drawing building plans for the new house—the house of my dreams. My first rough sketches were revised again and again before we were ready to start the actual building.

Soon the structure was under way—carpenters were busy with hammers and saws, and the two-story frame house took shape very quickly. We were happy and excited when it was finished late in October and moving day arrived. Many trips were made with team and wagon, hauling our furniture and household goods and supplies from the old house to the new. And a great deal of furniture had to be purchased and brought from town before we were finally settled.

Moving from the log cabin—then three rooms and an attic—to our big new house was a thrilling experience for all of us—no more pails of water to be carried from the river and no more bathing in the washtub on Saturday night!

“Why,” as John explained to one of his friends, “you can have a bath any old time. You just put in this plug and turn on the water—hot and cold—so it will be just right. And after you’ve had your bath all you do is pull out the plug. Ha—nothing to it. Just like town folks, see?”

The large, restful living room extended across the

entire front of the house—from east to west—with a huge fireplace at one end. Here we could burn real logs. Bookcases were built in on each side of the fireplace. Picture windows on the front looked out across the wide porch to the river and mountains beyond—and another big window on the west brought to view the high peaks of the Cabinet Range. The dining room, with its built-in china closets, was separated from the living room by an open archway. Its windows caught the morning sun and looked out on the forest of pine and fir and the far hills to the east.

The kitchen—smaller and quite compact—was my pride and joy, with its shiny white porcelain sink and bright faucets with hot and cold water. A plentiful spring of crystal-clear water had been discovered up the gulch back of the building site, and it was piped down to the house. A window above the sink brought in the sunlight, and tall cupboards on each side of the sink held food supplies, cooking utensils, and our everyday dishes and silverware. Cooking the meals and washing the dishes would be no chore at all in this bright and shining kitchen.

Off the kitchen was a short hallway leading to the stairway, with the laundry room, a bedroom, and the honest-to-goodness bathroom opening onto the hallway. Upstairs were seven rooms—six bedrooms and Harry's office. The full basement had bins for potatoes and other vegetables, and a section of shelves for home-canned fruits and vegetables and homemade pickles, jellies, and preserves.

One day in November, when a chill was in the air, I took little two-year-old Buzz and walked down to the old cabin. As we came to the door I pushed it open, and the baby ran in with a skip and a jump, shouting, "Home." But as he looked around he saw that the tables and chairs were gone, and the room was bare. Then he came up to me and, tugging at my skirt, said plaintively, "Let's doe back home." So we started back home, my feeling of nostalgia at leaving the old log cabin being replaced by joy as we came into sight of our new house—my Dream House realized. It was beautiful to behold—its rich cream-colored coat, its accents of brown, its forest-green roof—all so perfect in its setting amid the pines and firs. Smoke curling from the fireplace chimney beckoned to us and welcomed us home.

In due time flower beds and shrubs were planted around the house, and the lawn was seeded. A piece of land was cleared along the bench for the vegetable garden. Fruit trees and berry bushes were planted, and they thrived. We gradually cleared away the timber from the lower part of the ranch, and planted fields of grain and alfalfa. A new and modern highway was built parallel to the river—our broad front porch then commanding a view of the highway, the cultivated fields, and the sparkling river. And beyond the river one can catch glimpses of the Great Northern trains as they wend their way through forests of larch and fir on the wooded mountainside.

Here in our new house Winnie was born—our

littlest little sister—with pretty blue eyes and platinum-blond hair, rounding out our family. Here all of our "brothers and sisters" grew up, and our house still stands foursquare—secure from any future rampage of the treacherous but lovely Kootenai.

Yet there are moments, with the moon shining on the river's silvery ripples, when I think that I can hear the scraping of a boat on the farther shore. Then, briefly, I am back again with Harry and my babies in our little log cabin by the river.















*(Continued from front flap.)*

This is a fascinating and colorful narrative, giving a good picture of family life in a far corner of the Pacific Northwest in the early years of the century. There are accounts of farming activities, of experiences with Indians, tramps, and pets, of fishing trips and expeditions for huckleberries, of Libby's first circus, of memorable Christmases and Fourth of July, and of one major struggle with the rising waters of the Kootenai River.

After the flood it was necessary for Harry to make a second trip to England where his aged mother had been in failing health for some time. In June of the following year he returned home, after his mother's death, bringing many personal effects — pictures, beautiful china, silverware. Sufficient money was realized from the estate to improve the farm and build the "new" house, a two-story modern frame dwelling on the rise where the family had camped during the high water. Here the "littlest little sister" was born, here all the brothers and sisters grew up, and here, secure from any future rampage of the treacherous but lovely green Kootenai, the house still stands safe and foursquare.

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